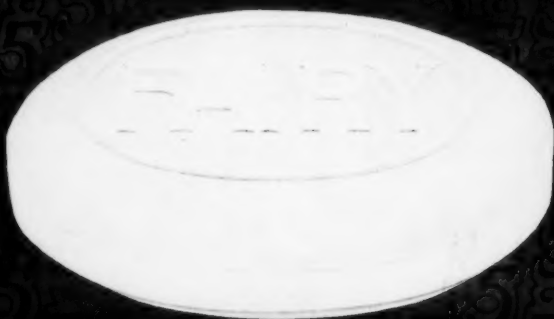


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Vol. XXXVII

FEBRUARY, 1916

No. 1

AINSLIE'S

The Magazine That Entertains

CONTENTS

Cover Design	Howard Chandler Christy	
The Last Card. Complete Novelette	Perley Poore Sheehan	1
Rubies. Poem	Shane Leslie	75
Nets or Cages? Short Story	Dana Gatlin	76
Lost Youth. Poem	Frances Caroline Willey	90
Suzanne. Short Story	F. Berkeley Smith	91
The Daughter Pays. Serial	Mrs. Baillie Reynolds	100
"Jack, in Love With Daisy." Short Story	Frank Leon Smith	123
Stories of the Super-Women. Series	Albert Payson Terhune	133
Perdita Robinson: The "Almost Princess."		
In the Queen's Name. Short Story	Justin Huntly McCarthy	143
Plays and Players.	Alan Dale	150
Inside the Lines With the Editor.		155
After the Tryst. Poem	Salomon de la Selva	158
Talks With Ainslee's Readers		159

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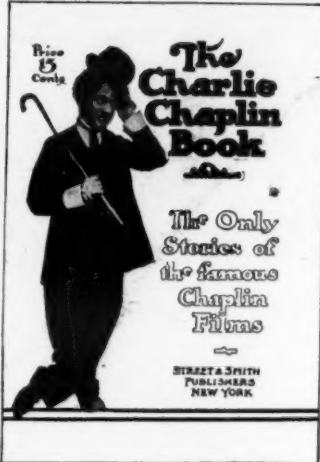
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VOL. XXXVII.

FEBRUARY, 1916.

No. 1.



CHAPTER I.

AS I look back upon it, I might have guessed the far-reaching change that was coming into my own life. Fate is an architect, and she shows you the plan in advance. I had glimpsed the plan. Secretly I had hankered for it. I was resigned to being a curate. I was resigned to taking my thrills from books and statues; and yet, all the time, I was yearning for the thing Fate had shown me—a palace of adventure with a touch of the Oriental about it, with a princess in charge, with an atmosphere of blood and attar of roses vibrating to the wail and drub of Arab music.

A man of peace! Bah!

That shows how much I have changed.

Thrills from books! Again bah! That's the way I feel about it now. I haven't opened Homer, even, since the change took place. Don't read Homer; live him. That's my motto now. Be able to look at a statue of Achilles or

Napoleon or George Washington, and say, "I'm like that."

I tell you, I might have foreseen this change in my own life. I had been living in Athens for more than a year. All Greece was aflame with "the great idea." That is what they call the national will to rise—to make Greece measure up to the promise of her ancestors. And now the whole world was fighting for its own "great idea." And there were the Allies drilling and knocking at the stone gate of the Dardanelles. In Athens you could almost hear the thunder of the guns. You could almost see the stage where the grand old drama was being played. Once more the spirits of Miltiades, of Philip, of Alexander, were abroad in the earth.

I felt it. I was thrilled. Old yearnings were stirred up from the bottom of my heart and the back of my brain.

But, even so, I couldn't have foreseen the adventure itself. I had enough imagination to write a pretty good ser-

mon. I had enough imagination to decipher a pretty badly damaged inscription on a piece of rock. I couldn't have imagined this thing, though. Ah, no!

I was reared a Puritan. Boston was my birthplace. I was the original of all those jokes about Boston children taking Emerson with them in their perambulators. It was as if the maiden aunt who reared me, knowing that my mother was very young and very French, had done her best to extirpate this double curse. She belonged to the school of "French! How shocking!" and of "Youth! Youth is the time for study!"

Dear old soul! She is dead now. So is my sainted mother, who lived just long enough to prattle baby talk to me in the language her own mother had taught her.

But stronger even than the will of a maiden aunt is fate. Kismet! Not only an architect, but a spider—a gossamer web here and another there. You can see the thing being built, if you'll look. And there's no use in shutting your eyes to it, anyway. Face it! Don't be afraid!

I shut my own eyes to it for a long time. I persisted in seeing myself as a man of peace, a student, a fledgling curate. While the world again shook to the sort of things that Homer sang, I sought to be neutral. I sought to keep cool. Yea, while the young men of the world were on fire for "the great idea," I sought to be mild, lukewarm, pleasant, mannerly.

Flapdoodle poppycock!

I followed one of those silken threads that fate spins, and found myself speaking French almost as readily as English before I was out of Harvard. I followed another of them, and there I was in Athens. And hardly had I set foot in Athens before I began to discover the ends of other threads that were to lead me on, first to that ad-

venture in Constantinople, afterward to God knows what.

"*Inshallah*," as the Turks say. The will of the Most High! It's good enough for me. I'm satisfied.

CHAPTER II.

From my window I could see the Acropolis. For me it had become something more than a hill with a temple on it. And over beyond it was a depth of purple sky that must have inspired all that Greece had ever known or hoped for. I had looked at it perhaps a thousand times. Every time I looked at it the spell of it grew stronger. When Greece fights her way back to the front rank of nations again, you will have the Acropolis at Athens to thank for the resurrection.

It happened to be my birthday, and I had taken the day off for a quiet celebration of my own—poring over some doubtful texts in my room, letting myself go in retrospect and prospect. I was poor. I was all alone in the world. And yet, I reflected, I was as rich as any man, and I had the whole world for a family.

Not only that, but over there in the nebulous East was a grandfather of mine who had always been a source of secret marvel to me. He was a very bad man, so I had been-told. An infidel, a Turk, a man with a harem—how that maiden aunt of mine had shuddered at the mere mention of him! A family ghost, who had nothing, forsooth, to do with the righteous Summerville stock to which my dear aunt belonged, but was a heritage of the French girl my father had married.

There is a lot of left-handed, dis-taff-sided color and romance in the old families of New England. The cold-eyed, thin-lipped women saw their men sail away to all the ports of the seven seas, and come back with heady

freights of liquors and spices, and who will ever know what memories?

My father must have had something of this in him. He must have been a Puritan of the Puritans, to judge by his sister, my aunt, who brought me up. Him I could not remember. He was never anything to me but a prim photograph. And, to judge by what my aunt told me about him, he must have been a sort of a cross between Cotton Mather and Miles Standish. I loved him, though, for having married a French girl against the wishes of his family; and I had set my face to the ministry because this had been his wish—according to my aunt.

Yet, secretly, the great pagan temple on the Acropolis appealed to me as few churches had ever done; as no church will ever do, perhaps, save one.

I was standing there at my open window, somewhat, I fancy, in the attitude of the Winged Victory of Samothrace. I believe I was chanting something from Pindar—to those sons of Athens who laid "the shining foundations of freedom." At any rate, I must have looked quite the fool. Suddenly I was conscious of a few words of foreign speech, followed by that word I have already mentioned:

"Inshallah!"

I recognized the word. You hear it constantly among Moslems—"If God will." I drew back. Had some one witnessed that exalted outburst of mine? And what were followers of the Prophet doing, anyway, in Athens, when Turkey and Greece were again on the verge of war?

Finally I overcame my shocked modesty, and again approached the window.

It was a perfect Greek day, an Athenian day—the air pure and sparkling, the summer heat of it tempered by a breeze from the mountains to the north; an Oriental dirge dance pulsing along somewhere near by; the soprano laughter of Merika Theotokes, my land-

lord's daughter, occasionally tinkling up with a ripple of speech that Demosthenes could have understood.

And I saw him there—a man I had come to know as Monsieur Beau.

He stood just outside the shabby paling that defended the Theotokes' front yard. Most of him was hidden by the riotous grapevine that shaded the place. Even so, I again judged him one of the most remarkable men I had ever seen.

He was about sixty-five, yet anything but old. He was a lion of a man—hunched-up shoulders, a leonine face, and, when he moved, a suggestion of stealthiness, grace, and power; a man who was heavy, yet light of foot, strong, yet quick. He was, as usual, well dressed in European clothes, but always with that suggestion about him that he could have worn another sort of clothing more gracefully. On his head was a panama hat. He kept touching this with one of his deft hands as if it bothered him.

It couldn't have been Monsieur Beau, certainly, who had said, *"Inshallah!"*; although I was aware that he had lived in Constantinople.

I leaned out a little farther, and saw a second man. A stranger he was, one who wore the Greek kilt or fustanella, such as is still used by peasants and by certain of the Greek highland regiments. He was a handsome youth—a good six feet of supple strength, an unyielding neck, the nose of an eagle, the mustache of a grenadier. And, ever since, I've had a curious little regret that I did not take a better look at him—so young, so strong, so handsome in his native costume. For I saw him again, only a few hours afterward, and he was dead.

But my interest had come back to Monsieur Beau. I found him looking at me, and on his face was an expression which I had often seen there before and which I had never been able to comprehend. It was a mixture of

savagery and yearning. It was both feline and tender. That describes it. And if he ever reads this, he'll understand.

I had come to know Monsieur Beau pretty well. For the past month or so I had been running across him constantly—at the Epigraphic Museum, on the portico of the Parthenon, in Constitution Square. He hadn't followed me, spied upon me—I was sure of that; and yet, every time I left him, I felt that I had been studied, weighed, appraised. I had seen, too, this same look on his face, and had wondered at it.

"*Bon jour, monsieur,*" he said. "I have something of importance to tell you."

"Enter!" I cried.

I met him at the front door, under the grapevine. I was about to offer him my hand, in the American fashion; but, following his gesture, I lifted my hand, instead, as I had seen certain old Greeks and Albanians do, and he caught it with a catlike movement, held it for a moment, touched it to his breast.

In spite of all this, there was something reticent about him, furtive, even. His companion in the fustanella had disappeared.

"Will you sit out here under the vine," I asked, "or in there?"

He cast a glance into the dusky interior of the house. There was a step down, then a brick-paved sitting room, cool, deserted save for the flittings of Merika, who came and went like a heavy-plumaged bird in a gaze.

"Inside," he said.

Before entering, he gave a look up and down the street—so much as we could see of it from the front door. A bullock cart was wheeling heavily along. A seller of walking sticks unshipped his load in the shade of a stable across the way and composed himself to rest. Monsieur Beau listened for a couple of alert seconds, apparently to the endless dance music I had heard

throughout the greater part of the afternoon.

"Were you expecting some one?" I asked.

"*Mais non!*" And he followed me in.

I asked Merika to bring us coffee, and we were alone. Once more I was aware that I was an object of interest to Monsieur Beau, that he was studying me. I faced him. He had taken off his hat. His bushy gray hair made him look more of the old lion than ever. His cheeks were lean. His chin was firm. His brown eyes were luminous and meditative.

"Monsieur," he said gravely, "I am an envoy from your grandfather, Monsieur de Guise."

"I wasn't even aware that my grandfather knew of my existence," I said. "Does he still live in Constantinople? Is he really a friend of Abdul-Hamid's?"

"You are, then, familiar with the story of Monsieur de Guise?"

"Not at all," I answered. I may have colored somewhat.

"He has plenty to answer for," said Monsieur Beau.

I was nettled.

"Pardon me," I said, "but, after all, he was my grandfather, and I'll ask you not to——"

I checked myself. I was talking to a man much older than I, one who, for some reason or other, had drawn me to him strangely ever since the first day he had sat down beside me on the steps of the Parthenon. Monsieur Beau, moreover, had helped to silence me with his own grim smile.

"When Monsieur de Guise left France," he said, "and incidentally bade adieu to that child of his who was destined to become your mother, it was because he had just killed his man in the Bois de Boulogne in a duel, and the man happened to be not only a villain—*un scélérat*—but also—a crown

prince. So Monsieur de Guise turned his child over to his best friends—the American family who adopted her.”

“And what did he do then?” I asked.

“He fled to Africa and joined the Legion. You should have seen him in those days! He had your build—slim, inclined to elegance, but—*bon Dieu!*—he could lift a bull with one hand; he could make a standing jump from the bare sand right over his horse; with a sword in his hand he became the Archangel Michael.”

“And then?”

“There was an affair in the desert. Your grandfather killed not only a good many Kabyles, who were then in revolt, but one of his own officers.”

“Good heavens!”

“Hold! The officer was a traitor. As for your grandfather, there was a question for a while whether he should be awarded the cross or shot, or both. In the meantime, he did not like his prison. He escaped. The desert called him. He became a charmer of serpents, a *prestidigitateur*, a magician.”

“Very interesting!”

“*En effet!* Eventually he came to Stamboul—Constantinople, as you call it—and there he won the friendship of his imperial majesty, Abdul-Hamid. But all this time he loved France. Ah, yes! He had never ceased to love his native land.”

“Or my mother?”

The old man looked at me. He was again wearing his hat, and this veiled his expression to some extent, particularly what might have shown in his eyes. But it seemed to me that for a second or two his leonine face was all wistful bitterness. Then he was looking away again.

“Listen well,” he said softly. “Your grandfather also loved—the lady who adopted his child. This lady he could not see again—with honor. She was devoted to the little girl. Your grandfather made the sacrifice.” He paused;

then went on more brightly: “And the atmosphere your grandfather then breathed was not, one might say, the best in the world for a Christian damsel—was not precisely that of a convent. Your mother, I believe, was brought up a Puritan. *Tant mieux!* And they brought you up a Puritan. *Tant mieux!*”

“Monsieur de Guise was no Puritan,” I laughed.

“Never refer to him by name,” urged Monsieur Beau impulsively. “He is to be ‘monsieur,’ or ‘your honor,’ or the ‘cadi’—‘cadi,’ by preference.”

I looked my surprise.

“And what does my grandfather desire?” I asked.

“He desires,” said Monsieur Beau, speaking very softly and distinctly, “that you go at once to Stamboul—”

“But——”

He silenced me, barely breathing what followed:

“To accept a delicate and dangerous mission.”

CHAPTER III.

There was a period of silence, as well there might be. My strange guest went into his pocket and brought out a *comboloio*—a string of beads, a sort of Moslem rosary. He began to toy with it absent-mindedly, as he had done several times before when he was in my company. It is a common enough habit, in Greece as well as in Moslem countries, and I had never attached any special significance to it. But this time, in the few seconds it took me to catch my mental breath, I found myself watching his hands. They were singularly fine hands, strong, flexible, delicate. The hands of the aged are apt to be blue and streaky. His weren’t.

I was watching his hands and the play of the wooden beads when the beads, quite suddenly, disappeared. I could scarcely believe my senses. Then there they were again, twisting in and

out among his fingers. Again they disappeared.

"You are something of a *prestidigitateur* yourself," I said, referring to what he had just told me about my grandfather.

"What—what do you mean?" he asked, as he slipped the beads into his pocket. "Oh, my hands!" he exclaimed, recovering himself. "*Oui*, something of a *prestidigitateur*! It was your grandfather who taught me that." He caught my eye and held it. "He desires that you go at once to Stamboul on an affair that will not—must not—wait!"

"But how am I to know— How am I to——"

"Listen, monsieur: You will say that ambassadors bring credentials. I have mine. They are borne inside that ring you wear, which you haven't removed since your eighteenth birthday."

"Tell me the name and the date," I said.

"The name is Jean Pierre François de Guise, and the date is 1845. I will tell you, also, that you were baptized with that name, although your aunt brought you up as plain John Summer-ville."

"Why didn't you tell me this at first?" I queried, without heat.

"I wasn't sure that you were my man," he answered.

"You knew my name all along, knew who I was."

"Still, you might not have been the man your grandfather sought. Not since the day of your birth has he lost interest in you. He knew what you were doing in college. He knew it when you got your traveling scholarship. He was overjoyed when you came to Athens. From Constantinople he studied you. He needed a son. He needed a brave man——"

"How do you know that I am brave?" I asked.

He answered: "I don't!"

"What is this thing he wants?"

"That cannot be explained until you are in Stamboul."

"But to get to Stamboul from Athens at the present time is all but impossible."

Monsieur Beau paused a long time and listened intently. We could hear the drone and drub of the dance. He appeared to be satisfied; but, none the less, he got up and went over to the door with that soft-footed tread of his, and stood there for several seconds gazing out. There was a clatter of dishes and a bar of song from the back of the house where Merika was at work.

"A way has been provided for you," said Monsieur Beau. "The only concern that you have to give yourself is to come at midnight to the Itonian Gate, where a carriage will be waiting for you to take you to Phalerum——"

"Not midnight to-night! Not this midnight!"

"Precisely."

"Let me get this straight," I said. "I have a grandfather in Constantinople, whom I have never seen. He sends you to look me over. You do so. Now, without warning, almost without preamble of any sort, you come here and tell me that my grandfather desires my presence for a 'delicate and dangerous mission.'"

"Exactly."

"And that I am to find a carriage at the Itonian Gate at midnight."

Monsieur Beau was looking at me unsmilingly, watchfully. He did not deem it necessary to speak.

"For you, monsieur," I went on, "I have the utmost respect. I am grateful to you for what you have told me about my grandfather. I feel that I should like to know him. But this thing is quite impossible. It isn't done. I shall have to refuse."

"You can't refuse," said Monsieur Beau.

"And why not, pray?"

"As I told you, the matter presses. I was expecting to wait yet another week, yet another fortnight, possibly. But I have received word that the moment is here. There are certain powerful enemies in Stamboul. They have got wind of the matter. At least one of them is here in Athens now."

"I have been brought up a good American," I said, rather stiffly. "I'm not afraid of any one, and I can't be coerced."

"You life will be needlessly sacrificed."

"By whom?"

Monsieur Beau, absorbed, made no answer.

"And, anyway," I said, "you yourself tell me that this mission, whatever it is, will be dangerous."

"But that is different," said Monsieur Beau. "It will be to render a service to the country your mother loved, to the country your grandfather has always loved. More than that, it may be"—his nervous hands were shaking slightly, but his voice was steady—"it may be the salvation, the regeneration, of an historic empire. I shall not insult you by speaking of pecuniary gain. I thought that it would be enough to say merely that your grandfather needs you, wants you; that I saw in you the same sort of a man he was when he was your age——"

"But what if I do refuse?" I persisted.

"Your grandfather," Monsieur Beau whispered, "has never let a life stand between him and his duty, as he saw it. There are many such men in the world to-day, and rightly so. We men are as grass. But a great cause lives on."

"Do you mean to say that he would have me murdered?" I ejaculated.

"It might be beyond his power to prevent it."

"Then I do refuse," I affirmed.

Monsieur Beau slowly shook his head.

"You must not refuse. This house is watched. It is known by this time that I have talked to you about this matter. If your grandfather has powerful means at his disposal, so have his enemies. Your only hope is to come to the Itonian Gate at midnight. In the meantime, I shall see that you are protected."

"I am a man of peace," I said. "When I finish what I am doing at the American College here, I expect to return to the United States and be ordained a minister of the Gospel."

"You have plenty of time to reflect," said Monsieur Beau.

"But midnight is only seven hours—six hours away. If I refuse to appear——"

"You can't refuse," said Monsieur Beau.

"At the Itonian Gate——"

"There will be a carriage there—at midnight."

The Greeks are not a musical people. The thought had occurred to me, off and on throughout the day, as I had listened to the monotonous whang and thump of the Oriental dance. And, like a theme to the day's events and imaginings, I had been hearing it all the time that Monsieur Beau had been talking to me—reedy pipes and squeaky violins and a drum or two, with an occasional gust of vocal accompaniment.

Now, while Monsieur Beau was still getting out those last words of his, I was conscious that the music had come to a sudden stop. My visitor must have been conscious of it, too. He held his breath, alert.

Then from one of the pipes came a wild scurl of music entirely unlike any that had thus far been played.

With a grace and agility most surprising in one of his years, he was again

at the door. He stood there for a moment looking out—just like a lion at the mouth of his den. He ran forward to the rickety gate. There he looked again. He was gone.

It was almost six o'clock.

I was still sitting at the table as in a trance when Merika came in to clear away the coffee cups. She spoke to me slowly, so that I could understand her Greek. She was an attractive lass, dark, richly colored, thick-waisted, not very large, modest to a point of panic when strangers were about, but looking upon me as something of a father confessor. You see, I always wore black, and was getting along in years. She couldn't have been more than eighteen, while I was a good five years older than that.

I relate the following incident merely to show what a perturbed state I was in.

She came to the table where I was seated. She leaned over to take the coffee cups and glasses away. Her dusky, flushed cheek was within half a foot of my face.

Well, I kissed her.

I did! I don't know what made me do it. If her consternation was great, it was no greater than my own. I had never done such a thing before. I had never kissed any girl before, or woman, except my aunt. Do you know the effect that it had upon me? It blinded me. It made me so dizzy I almost toppled over.

And that must have been the effect of it upon poor Merika, as well. I felt her sway against me. I caught the Greek words that mean "My heart!" I was startlingly aware of her weight and her resiliency, her warmth and her perfume.

Then I was racing for my room. I did not pause until I had the door closed behind me and bolted, too.

I was in a turmoil.

CHAPTER IV.

I had been torn from my moorings. There is no doubt about that. My brain jumped and tossed like a catboat in a sudden squall. I had been hearing talk about powerful enemies, about murder, about midnight rides, about an impossible grandfather who was to be referred to as the *cadi*.

"O *cadi*!" It sounded like the "Arabian Nights."

And this, above all—I had been guilty of a gross breach of gentlemanly conduct! I had behaved like a mucker.

I went to the window. I saw that something was happening to the cane seller across the way, as well. He was being set upon by a couple of stalwart ruffians. He fought them off. He ran down the street, abandoning his stock of merchandise; an amazing incident in itself, for your Greek, as a rule, will cling to merchandise as he clings to life.

I put two and two together. I recollected the peculiar outburst of odd music that had sent Monsieur Beau on his way, and I knew that it must have been some sort of a signal.

It was all as if a curtain had been torn aside, as if I were getting a look at a life such as, hitherto, I had never suspected of existing outside of newspapers and books. And, what was more dumfounding still, this unsuspected life might become my own. Was it that I was shedding some chrysalis of innocence and youth?

At that, my thought came swiftly back to Merika. I was smitten with pity and dismay. I had been the knave, but I decided firmly that I would not also be the poltroon.

"You'll have to marry her," I told myself. "It's the only honorable thing that you can do."

And yet the resolve brought no sense of peace with it.

"Be a Greek," I told myself.

But was I a Greek?

I was looking at myself in the mirror, and I confess that what I saw gave me pause. As I say, I took kindly to black. This accentuated the natural pallor of my skin and the straw tint of my hair. My glasses, necessary only when I had much reading to do, and hence frequently mislaid, I had finally attached to myself with an adequate ribbon. And, once well away from Boston, I had persisted in letting my whiskers grow.

Moral insurance! A fellow with whiskers will refrain from many things that tempt your clean-shaven chap.

No, I was a dominie, a parson, if there ever was one.

The conclusion brought me both disappointment and consolation. There for a while I had been figuring myself as a soldier of fortune, a man built to the form of that outrageous ancestor of mine. Now I saw clearly that this was impossible. I was, in fact, a man of peace; and I was solemnly glad that I had told Monsieur Beau as much, frankly and without equivocation.

Midnight! A carriage at the Itoman Gate! A grandfather in Stamboul waiting to intrust me with a "delicate and dangerous mission"!

It took my breath away.

As for courage, it was taking about all I had to go down and face Monsieur Theotokes at dinner. Yet face him I did, and found him reticent, distraught. Merika served, as was her custom; but she took the first occasion, dear girl, to assure me, with a fugitive smile, that she had fully recovered from that Hunnish outburst of mine, bore me no malice.

An unsatisfactory meal—Theotokes noncommittal, Merika furtive, myself on needles and pins. I charged it against my grandparent. More than ever I loved peace, I loved books, I loved the cloistered quiet and moral elevation of the cloth. The night deep-

ened, and, likewise, my feeling of suspense.

At last I could stand it no longer, and I made my way out into the dewy night.

The bells were striking nine o'clock when I set forth. Fainter, but infinitely clear, they were striking eleven when I raised my eyes and found myself in the presence of the Parthenon. I had climbed to the top of the Acropolis almost unconsciously, and the grand old temple that is the visible soul of Greece burst upon me like a vision in the starlight.

I don't know how it affects others, but I can never feel alone on the Acropolis at night. There is always a swarming multitude there for me—maidens and men, priestesses and priests, athletes, heroes, and kings, goddesses and the mothers of gods. I see them dressed in white, their bare limbs flashing, the wild olive in their hair. I hear them chant. I see their hands stretched out with votive offerings in them.

I was enjoying a spirit spectacle like that, and congratulating myself on my definite conclusion to remain in Athens, when I was conscious that there were other prowlers about—as if some of my ghosts had materialized. It made my hair stand on end a little. Why should there be prowlers, other than myself, afoot on this rocky hillside, with Athens far below and the Parthenon looming nebulous above?

A dim figure came toward me, cloaked and crouching. It was Merika. I started to speak. She warned me, with a gesture, to be silent.

"I followed you here," she began in a whisper. She was out of breath, and the words came slowly. "You are in danger."

"From whom?"

"Some men came to the house just after you went out," she said. "I think they are around here somewhere now,

looking for you. They said that you were a Turkish spy. They had an order for your arrest."

"Absurd!"

"But, oh, the danger is not absurd!"

"I'll go back to the house and confront them."

"They left to look for you. They learned that you came in this direction. I ran ahead of them. I am here."

Her dark eyes glowed up at me through the starlight. I felt very grateful to her.

"You're a brave girl," I said.

"I did it for you."

"We'll go back together," I whispered.

Again Merika was thinking of some one other than herself.

"I mustn't be seen with you now, on my father's account," she said. "There are wicked men in Athens. Oh, are you sure that it will be all right for you to come back at all?"

As she said this, she was listening. So was I. We could both catch again that whispering shift of hidden forms that had attracted my attention in the first place. There was something indescribably eerie about it. It was as if that ocean of war that had engulfed the world were creeping up to us, even here, like a second deluge.

"I'm all right," I whispered. "May the good Lord bless you for a fine, brave girl! Now, you run along!"

She raised her cheek to me. Somehow or other, it brought a little lump to my throat. Then she did as she was ordered. Greek women have never lost that fine submissiveness they learned when Greece was a Moslem state. They stand and serve while the men eat. They do as they are told. They are grateful for the favors they receive. Self-immolation is their creed.

Cautiously I stooped and picked up a fragment of marble.

CHAPTER V.

I still have that piece of marble. I use it as a paper weight, and not only as a paper weight, but as a talisman, for I have identified it. There is a certain statue of Heracles, or Hercules, in the Louvre, at Paris, and it lacks the index finger of the right hand. This was that finger. There wasn't an ounce of that statue that hadn't been worshiped, permeated, with the thought of victory; and now there was a good pound of that faith clutched in my own right hand.

At first, I believed that I had stumbled upon the meeting of some secret fraternity. There have been all sorts of queer brotherhoods in Greece since time out of mind.

Then I thought of conspirators. The country was, indeed, distraught and feverish, burning with half-smothered fires, hating the Turk and fearing the German; at least, so much I had gathered from the local press and from hearsay, although I had done my best to shut such things from my mind.

And, even then, I was finding it impossible to apply literally all the things that Monsieur Beau and Merika had told me. For the twenty-three years I had been on earth, no public or private disorder had touched me in any way. I knew that men bled and died, that they murdered each other, that there were prisons and asylums in the world, that, even then, there were over a thousand miles of trenches which courage and science were transforming momentarily into shambles. But these things were still of that world apart.

My awakening was swift.

Off in the star mist ahead of me I heard a gasping cough. There was a whirl of movement, a rush of guttural speech.

This part of the Acropolis was a rugged hillside, covered with low bushes and much débris. I scrambled forward.

I had no thought or desire for flight. Murder—that was what I had seen and heard. If it was because of me, I would know it. I was responsible. I had that remarkable weapon of mine clutched in my hand. I thought of my maiden aunt. I thought of Monsieur Beau. I thought of Merika.

There were at least a score of men ahead of me. I could see them clearly now. Some were in the fustanella; some were in European dress; several, as I was astounded to see, were in the uniform of the Greek soldiers then mobilized in Athens. And they were all mixed up together, as if they were all bent on cutting one another's throats without distinction.

The crowd swerved as I came up. With all their tenseness, they were making little noise.

A moment later, I was looking at a man on the ground. I recognized him before I turned him over. He was the fine young fellow whom I had seen that afternoon talking to Monsieur Beau. There was a Turkish dagger in him. It had been driven in so deep and hard that I couldn't pull it out. And he was dead.

I staggered to my feet. As if at the same instant I was in the midst of it all—grabbed at by strange hands, struck, clung to, stifled.

I fought.

A fellow in the garb of a policeman tried to envelop me in his arms, and I gave him a blow in the pit of the stomach. There seemed to be a dozen of the rowdies on my back. I struck their hands and their arms, their bodies and their thighs—any part I could reach—with that weapon of mine. They left me no breath either to reason or expostulate.

And, explain it as you will, up from my right hand there ran a feeling of glad rage. It was such a feeling as Hercules must have felt when he smashed his music teacher.

It got hotter.

I hurled myself over backward, and the whole mob of us surged downhill. A colossus in kilts jerked me to my feet, hugging me like a grizzly bear. He seemed to be bent on carrying me off, but I hammered his chest, broke loose. I was afoul of a fellow who was trying to make a revolver go off. Him I walloped with my own weapon. Then there were two men there instead of one. A mere touch, and down they went.

Often I've lain awake till dawn imagining what I might do were I an angel with a flaming sword. It was almost a dream come true, with the finger of Hercules in my hand.

The colossus tripped, spluttering oaths. He dragged me with him. We were the bottom layer of a human pyramid, or it felt that way. Light went out. I couldn't breathe. But fight! Ten seconds, fifteen, remained to me before I should suffocate. I said my prayer to the bit of marble, and it was as if the whole mass exploded—legs, arms, bodies, heads.

I had been holding something in my teeth. It was the toe of a pointed boot. I crammed it at a mouth that was grinning on a level with my eyes. The finger of Hercules whirled and gave me space. For a while, I almost believed that the fight was over. Not for long.

Once again I was plunging downhill, over broken marble blocks, through heaps of dust, into weeds that stung like hornets, and all that was left of that satanic pack right there at my heels. There were fewer of them—not half so many, I should say. But, even so, there was no chance of getting away. Not even a chamois could have kept its feet on a hill like that, at a pace like that.

Before I knew it, I was taking a whirling header through space. I landed in a sitting posture, much jolted. It was a grand-stand seat for one of

the prettiest fights I have ever seen. It was that colossus of mine against four or five others.

I never saw a man with longer arms or longer legs, save one; and this man was using them all. A fellow tried to strike him with a knife as big as a saber. Goliath kicked his wrist and straight-armed at the point of his jaw. With his left hand he had, in the meantime, twisted another of his foes to the ground, and he fought him to a finish there with his feet, while he was using his hands on the others. My enemy, perhaps, but it made me gloat.

Then, while the giant was wrestling with the two survivors and trying to knock their heads together, up came a third ready to stab him in the back. Too much, that, for the finger of Hercules! Sitting as I was, I made a jump—got there just in time. The lump of marble sent him whirling. My giant got the better of his two men. He turned just in time to see me knock out the fellow with the knife.

I saw a look of ferocious joy on his face. He said something I didn't catch. He reached for me.

"No, you don't!" I panted.

We sparred. We clinched. This time I was certain that it was all up. Still, I had rested a bit, was strong and hot. We hugged each other hard. We were on the brow of a perpendicular drop of a yard or so. We swayed. We fell. We landed on the slope below and went on rolling down like a pair of wild cats. I believe that I was swearing. I know that he was, for there is a peculiarity about profane speech that makes it recognizable in any tongue.

He was like a bundle of steel springs. The two hands of him were clawed traps fit to hold a wolf. He was trying to get them about my throat, and, at the same time, I was trying to make him desist. No, I wasn't trying to murder him—not even in self-defense. I had seen him fight. I was tremendously

keen to have him hors de combat. But—well, I admired him. He was Homeric.

I freed my right hand. I had the finger of Hercules poised for his temple. I saw the frenzy in his eyes go dim.

"*Inshallah!*"

He whispered it—whispered it with his last breath.

Sublime, I call it. I could no more have slain him then than I could have slain a brother of the cloth. Somehow or other, I had mastered him, anyway. Instead of striking him, therefore, with that murderous bit of Pentelic art, I bounced his head a couple of times on the ground, instead. Then I was up and away.

Not straight downhill, but down, down! Falling, rolling, plunging!

I had the vaguest sort of an idea that I had left behind me the Temple of Dionysus, that I was somewhere at the southerly foot of the Acropolis. But I was so spent, so breathless, so out of all my senses, that I didn't know where I was when I emerged from the rocks and weeds onto the semblance of a broad road.

I stood there, gasping and clutching at my heart. I heard the distant booming of a bell. Mechanically I began to count.

Twelve!

What was that thing that had been set for twelve? I tried to recollect, but failed.

A carriage rolled up, and I signaled it. Anything to get away! I couldn't have walked a stadium. I was, indeed, all in—all in and fairly incrustured with cuts and bruises. It was the speed of the carriage that brought me to myself. I looked out.

Cool air, with a smack of the sea in it, completed my enlightenment. Unwittingly, I had fought my way to the Itonian Gate. This was the carriage. then, that Monsieur Beau had said

would be waiting for me. It was bearing me off to Phalerum.

CHAPTER VI.

Even then, I suppose, I might have turned back, had it not been for a peculiar and touching incident. It is true Athens had ceased to be for me what it had been only a few hours ago. After a fashion, it had become a thing of horror. There I had struck and been struck, had shed my own blood and that of my fellow men. For all I knew, I had killed some one, or more than one. At that very moment it is possible that they were sounding the alarm for me—a criminal, a man to be hunted, a beast to be caged. But, even so, I say, I might still have turned back, had it not been for what immediately followed.

There came a beat of footsteps on the road right there at the side of the carriage, a gurgling labor of lungs, a lurch, and there was my late adversary riding on the step of the carriage, clinging to the door.

He looked at me. He recognized me. He smiled. He murmured the one word: "*Merhaba!*"—the Mohammedan salutation.

I understand it now. I did not then. It appears that he took me for a Moslem, no less, for the way I had fought. Likewise, it was then I had my first inkling of the truth of the saying you hear so often throughout the East, to the effect that every Turk is a gentleman. Here this fellow and I had been at daggers drawn, had fought each other like a couple of tigers; and now he was smiling at me, was hailing me as a brother.

I would not be outdone.

"*Merhaba!*" I repeated after him; and then: "*Inshallah!*"

It was all the Turkish that I knew; quite enough, though, to reassure him, evidently, for he jogged to the ground

while I swung open the door, and then, with no slacking of our speed, he was in the carriage and seated at my side.

In the twilight, by signs and by such Greek as he knew, he made me understand that he was my friend; that he had run after me as soon as he was able to get to his feet; that he was perfectly satisfied to have me where I was and to be there with me.

"Osmanli?" I asked.

He nodded his head with energy. So he was a Turk. And his name, so he gave me to understand, was Reshad. Now, Reshad and his comrade, Nour—he who had been the first to die, back there—had been sent out for a double purpose. So I gathered then, and so I was later informed. They were, first, to act as my bodyguard in case I was attacked; and, second, *they were to see that I came to Phalerum.*

"And if I didn't come to Phalerum?" I inquired as best I could.

Reshad's Greek was faulty, likewise mine, so we were reduced to communication chiefly by signs. Thus possibly he didn't understand my question, nor I his answer. At any rate, his answer was this:

He lifted his angular chin. He drew a finger across his lean throat.

In old Phalerum, where Athens still goes for the sea bathing as it did in classic days, there is a restaurant built out into the purple waters of the gulf. Almost before the carriage had stopped at the outer rim of the establishment, I had caught a familiar contour on a dimly lit terrace. It was that of Monsieur Beau.

Should I greet him as a friend? Should I chide him for demolishing my peace? Man worries about decisions when all the time the decision has already been made by fate.

I saw that Monsieur Beau was not alone. I saw that he was very much interested in the man who stood in front

of him. So keen was his interest, in fact, that it gave me a sense of my own unimportance. I drew near. I did not speak. The man who confronted Monsieur Beau was speaking—with the throaty vehemence of the mad Moslem, yet softly, politely, eloquently. I found something to admire in his very restraint. I even admired his appearance, although I did not like it.

He was about forty. He was perfectly dressed in the European style, all in white—white flannels, white shoes, a white straw hat. He was very dark, with a longish black mustache, and he had the wide nostrils of those in whom life and the passions run strong. He was a trifle solid of build. His feet were wide apart. He smiled, letting his teeth flash, but his eyes were stern.

Almost before I knew it, Monsieur Beau was presenting me.

"Monsieur Summerville, Bayezid Pasha."

The name meant little to me, if anything. That shows how ignorant I was of current politics. I did not know it then, but I know it now. I was standing in the presence of one of the strongest men of new Turkey—the ill-starred empire of the Young Turks.

"The honor is mine," said Bayezid Pasha, in perfect English. For a moment his eyes were on mine. I felt that I was appraised. His fingers lingered against mine, strong, electric. He smiled. "So your troubles have begun," he said.

I was looking like a wreck, and I had not forgotten the fact. Indeed, I had intended using my appearance as justification for anything I might have to say to my grandfather's emissary.

"I had a fight," I said. "It wasn't my fault. You'll pardon my appearance."

"I told you," purred Monsieur Beau in French, addressing himself to Bayezid Pasha.

The latter shrugged. I had apparently ceased to exist for him.

"Better," he said, "that he should be assassinated here than in Stamboul."

Could he have been referring to me?

The terrace where we were standing was partly surrounded by a growth of ilex. Through high windows, wide open, came the gusty swoon of a czigany orchestra, the kaleidoscopic color and movement of men and women in summer attire. We were immersed in an atmosphere as frothy and heady as champagne. So it seemed to me. But it was champagne with a drop of poison in it. And we were the poison.

I had cast a quick glance over Bayezid Pasha. I didn't like, but I had to admire, too, the insolent way in which he disregarded me. And I saw a boss on his hip—a bump under his flannel coat. No, I couldn't be mistaken. He had a revolver.

I looked at Monsieur Beau. He was still the lion, veiled, contemplative, unafraid. And my heart went out to him because he was unafraid, and old.

"Monsieur Beau," I said quite irrelevantly, "is a friend of mine."

Bayezid droned his comment: "Um-m-m-m!"

"So you propose to have us arrested?" said Monsieur Beau softly and steadily. He chuckled, but not humorously. "And we shall commit suicide in our cells, to the sorrow of every one."

The pasha shrugged his shoulders.

"I merely tell you," he said, almost apologetically, "that the place is surrounded. Our young friend, here, may remain in Athens or return to Europe or go back to America; and you I invite to return with me to Stamboul. You wouldn't like to see those special passports wasted. Otherwise——"

Again he shrugged.

I wondered if Monsieur Beau were armed. I was, at any rate. I still had that finger of Hercules in the pocket of

my disordered coat. I touched it. It made me bold.

"Monsieur Beau is a friend of mine," I repeated, "and if he is arrested, you may be assured that I shall not desert him. As for what you say about my own movements, I'll merely suggest that I'm an American, that I'm not used to dictation, that I'll go when and where I please."

I'll admit that it was sheer impudence. But I softened the words with a smile, as Bayezid Pasha again turned and coolly met my eyes. He must have seen, though, that I was earnest enough.

"Are you aware," he asked, with a shade of contempt, "that you are engaged upon a very perilous enterprise?"

"I'm not engaged upon any enterprise, except the pursuit of knowledge," I answered, honestly enough.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"That, monsieur, is quite as if I asked you what you were doing here."

"If you go to Stamboul," he warned softly, "your life won't be worth a piaster. Go home! That's my advice to you."

"Then you did refer to me when you said that I might as well be assassinated here as over there. Who are you that you should threaten me and my friend, here?"

The Turk's brows lowered. His mouth stretched a little as his strong chin came out. I believed that he was on the point of attacking me, then and there. His eyes seemed to grow smaller and brighter. His nostrils expanded. And he took his time about whipping his passion under control again, too. Finally his stretched lips relaxed into the semblance of a ferocious smile. His taut muscles loosened.

"I'm not sure," he said slowly and evenly, "whether you are ignorant or reckless, or neither, or both. But I warn you again never to set foot in Stamboul."

CHAPTER VII.

There was a man in evening dress, small and fat, and yet with a certain dignity and authority about him, whom I had vaguely remarked in the offing while this somewhat heated conversation was in progress. During the lull that followed Bayezid Pasha's last words, this worthy came forward, and I saw that he was either the proprietor of the place or a *maitre d'hôtel*. He bowed. He rubbed his hands.

"If messieurs will step around to the terrace fronting the sea," he said, "they will find that there is some air."

"No, *merci*," said Bayezid Pasha

"And why not?" Monsieur Beau demanded. "Let us, rather, do as monsieur suggests. I am sure that Monsieur Summerville, here, must be very thirsty. Whatever our decision, there is no occasion for haste."

"Ah, but there is occasion for haste," droned Bayezid.

"I'll go to arrange you a place," said the stout gentleman, as he withdrew.

Bayezid Pasha looked after him, not very well pleased, I should say.

I looked from one to the other. I judged that I had said about enough, but I was ready for anything. I turned and cast a glance in the direction of Reshad. The giant had lit a cigarette; he was swallowing smoke, as if he had nothing to do with all this.

"At my age," said Monsieur Beau, "one does not like to make decisions hastily; one does not like *brusquerie* or scandal. I dare say that many in there"—he flashed a hand toward the open windows—"would be alarmed were they to know that an enemy of Greece was at the door."

I saw a spark in Bayezid's eye. His smile became a grin. What he said struck me as very odd.

"No prestidigitation!"

"*Mais non! Mais non!*" said Monsieur Beau.

We walked slowly along the terrace—just strolled along—the four of us, keeping close to the ilex. Once, twice, I was certain that I caught a gleam of eyes through the leaves. We turned a corner of the building and looked out over the starlit bay. A blue night, blue and golden. The water was as still and as studded with stars as the sky itself. We were afloat in space—as on a motionless airship, as on a magic carpet, between two skies.

And it must have affected others that way, too, for Monsieur Beau, who had been carrying his hat in his hand, let it fall, had a little trouble in recovering it.

Then the picture was rendered more perfect, if that were possible, by a boat that came drifting into the panorama. She had a lofty lateen sail that showed hazily red where the lights of the restaurant caught it. She was being sculled along by four long sweeps. For all the world, she was an "Argo" ship, such as Jason might have known.

We stood at the side of a balustrade only a few feet above the water. I myself was wishing that I might bathe in it, I was so dirty and covered with wounds. It was a wish that was to have its fulfillment sooner than I expected.

The stout gentleman in evening dress had mobilized half a dozen servants, who advanced with a round iron table and four chairs. I was grateful that we were not forced to sit down any closer than we were to the other pleasure seekers on the terrace. In spite of the late hour, the pavilion and all the terrace adjoining it were crowded—officers in uniform, ladies in gauze and silk, civilians.

Monsieur Beau, I remember, ordered a *grenadine*, and, knowing it to be innocuous, so did I. Bayezid Pasha ordered a lemonade. And Reshad—the giant Turk, the bloodthirsty villain who could fight four men at a time and get

the better of them—he ordered a sherbet.

I looked at the lateen sail. It seemed to hover like a meditative bird, the sail flapping, the four sweeps moving lazily. Still, it was gradually getting closer. I thought I saw the thin flash of a green light across its darker surface—like a glowworm, what the Turks call a star worm. My eyes drifted to the dark contour of the roof of the pavilion. I may have been mistaken, but it seemed to me that I saw an exactly similar green flash there. I turned, ready to comment upon the phenomenon, but found the interest of the others concentrated upon what was being said.

It was Monsieur Beau who spoke, very softly and in French.

"You have done me the honor," he said, "of warning this young friend of mine not to go to Stamboul. Let me offer you a similar service, excellency. Let me suggest that you go from Athens to Paris. You will not be ill received by the foreign office there. I dare say that they would welcome you as an ally in the negotiations that are bound to follow the war."

The pasha was looking at Monsieur Beau as if bent on reading the inner history of his soul.

"And why haven't you yourself returned to France, monsieur?"

"One can often serve one's country well beyond her frontiers," said Monsieur Beau. "I would have been fighting for her in the trenches now, and all forgiven, had I not received intimation that I could better serve her otherwise."

Bayezid grinned.

"It is as I always maintained, monsieur. You are faithful not to Turkey, but to her enemy."

"France is no enemy of Turkey's," said Monsieur Beau. "She is her half sister. They have grown old together. They have suffered much. It would be only just if, in their old age, they

should sweeten each the life of the other to some extent."

A waiter, attended by the fat gentleman in evening dress, appeared with the refreshments. I had never been so thirsty in my life. I listened to the tinkling ice as to the music of angels. The lateen sail was very close.

"Have you noticed the phosphorus in the water?" our host inquired brightly.

"Why, no," said Monsieur Beau amiably, getting to his feet and peering over the railing. He beckoned me to follow.

We were standing there at the side of the water when Monsieur Beau tossed back his head with a lionlike movement. He grunted a command to Reshad. I saw a spasm of alarm on the face of Bayezid Pasha, saw him pawing for his weapon.

Then I myself was obeying a command that not for one second—not for one tiny fraction of a second—did it occur to me to disobey. It was:

"Jump for the water! Quick!"

And there I was in the water, with the venerable head of Monsieur Beau beside me. Another splash, and there was Reshad.

I spat the water from my mouth.

"Dive!" I cried. "Bayezid's got a revolver."

"*Mais non*," said Monsieur Beau. "I took it from him when I dropped my hat."

There was a clamor on the terrace we had left. The lateen sail loomed up. There was a rush of soft speech in Turkish. The three of us—Monsieur Beau, Reshad, I—were being dragged aboard.

CHAPTER VIII.

You will remark that I did not seek this thing. Men never do seek their adventures, anyway; any more than they consciously seek life. And if afterward I had my share in the amazing, the touching, the lurid, the haunting events that followed, why, kismet! It

was the same fate that had thus far brought me on my way.

There was a whirl of drenched confusion. Like Venus, I had risen from the waves; so I told myself. And, like her, wasn't I looking upon a new world? Gone was Athens. Gone the polite and sometimes boring colleagues of the American College. Gone Merika Theotokes. Gone the matutinal vaporings of youth—the rent fog curtain through which I had already glimpsed this world into which I had come.

It was a world of strong men. I had guessed it before. It was confirmed to me now. While I, the younger man, was still trying to knock the water from my ears, there was Monsieur Beau, hatless, dripping wet, standing, collected, dominant, giving his orders. I tell you, it gave me an added touch of awe to see the way that he was looked at and obeyed by the crew.

And such a crew!

Pirates—that was my first impression of them; a bronzed and shaggy lot; fez, turban, the two combined, or none at all; bare feet or pointed shoes; baggy trousers and calico shirts; and all of them taking their orders from that lionlike old Frenchman as if he had been Cæsar come back to life again.

The moment that we were pulled, sloshing, from the water, the boat, in response to a swing of the port sweeps, had whirled toward the open gulf. She was light on her keel, like a Turkish caïque, almost like a gondola. And by the time I looked back, the lighted terrace was already dropping fast astern.

There was still a small confusion of sound and movement where we had left Bayezid Pasha, but it was clear that, by the majority of the crowd, our departure, like our arrival, had been unperceived. I could even see the leader of the czigany orchestra squeezing the ultimate note from his violin, sure that the universe watched and listened.

Fifty, a hundred yards away, and

the top of the high lateen was caught by a pushing breeze. The boat responded to it like a wraith. There were no lights aboard. After the first few orders, there was scarcely any sound. It was a ghost ship. It flitted. It lipped the water with a dialect like whispered music.

I can't explain it, but suddenly I was immensely glad. I looked at Monsieur Beau, with his tousled mane, his reflective eyes, and his meager, strong face. He looked back at me.

"My boy," he said softly, "we're on our way."

"To see the *cadi*?"

"You know what a *cadi* is?"

"A sort of Turkish nobleman, a leader, a judge."

"Precisely. And our *cadi* is the first among them." He cast a quick look at the receding shore. His eyes glowed. "The thing is well begun."

"What is the thing?"

"Patience. You'll see."

"And where are we going now?"

"*Là bas!*"—over there. He left me, as if unwilling to say more just then.

Là bas!

*The misty blue of the Ægina Gulf stretched away ahead of us for miles. Behind us lay the receding lights of Phalerum and Piræus, like all the other known things of my life thus far. But over there was a mystery, a chance to help the country that my mother had loved, a chance to save an historic empire, as Monsieur Beau had said. I made no doubt about it. While the Allies were still doing what they could to pierce the Dardanelles, there were secret forces at work about which the world knew nothing.

The breeze freshened the farther we got away from the coast. There was evidently to be no pursuit. Indeed, unlighted as we were, and silent, we must have been as elusive in the night as an Athenian owl.

I got out of my soggy coat. I felt

so much better for it that I slipped off my soggy shoes and trousers. Next, I abandoned my shirt. I glanced about me. The pirates were gentlemen. I was unobserved. I threw off my socks and underclothes. I stood there in the tepid starlight naked and unashamed. I raised my head and my arms in I know not what pagan worship.

There was a pink-and-lilac dawn, when the air and the quiet surface of the water seemed alive with creatures that we could almost touch, almost see, but not quite. Far to the north I could see the dim pink mountains of Attica. To the right of us was Ægina, for all the world like a floating cloud—a blue cloud sketched out in pink—instead of a mountain that had given the very sea its name.

There were many sail about—green, yellow, crimson; a stain of smoke in the direction of Piræus and my lost Athens; another on the horizon where a steamer, with her head to the great, mysterious East, seemed to be standing still.

I went aft in my damp union suit and trousers. The boat was not more than forty feet in length, with a low deck that was a mere floor to the hull. I felt a desire to speak to Monsieur Beau, and I had failed to see him. What I saw, and what held me motionless, was an old Turk, barefooted, in a scarlet fez and a purple gown that reached from chin to heels and was circumscribed by a twisted sash. He was making his prayers with his face toward Mecca. There was something infinitely dignified and impressive in the action; nothing of the Pharisee about it, not in the least. He was as sincere and natural as a man washing his face. He raised his arms. He knelt. He bowed his head to the unclean floor of the boat. Then, quite calmly, he seated himself and looked about him. Not until then did I recognize him.

It was Monsieur Beau.

He smiled gravely when he saw me, motioning me to come and sit beside him. He called me "son"—"*mon fils*"—which, like himself, was at once both French and Oriental. He made no reference to his religion, and, of course, neither did I. In fact, I had little to say at all until one of the men, who looked as if he might have had a Nubian somewhere among his ancestors and whose name was Kemal, brought us coffee and biscuit, then cigarettes, then fire in the shape of a small live coal in a pair of tongs.

"It looks as if we'd have a pleasant day for our cruise," I said tentatively.

"I hope that we shall soon have more wind," said Monsieur Beau; "else we are apt to be late for our rendezvous."

"I'm sorry," I said, "then you can't speak to me openly and fully."

He was quiet for a long time. I was afraid I had hurt his feelings. Finally he reached out one of his supple hands and touched my knee. We were both sitting cross-legged.

"My son," he said, "we are both under the shadow of your grandfather. The less you know until you have stood in his presence and heard his purpose from his own lips, the better it will be for you and for me."

"Is he so terrible as all that?" I asked.

"Terrible, and grand," he replied, with I don't know what of ultimate conviction.

"If he should decide that, after all, he doesn't like me, it is probable, then, to be pretty embarrassing. You have already intimated that he is no great respecter of human life—not even that of a grandson."

"Be submissive," said Monsieur Beau. "Do not approach him too closely. Speak only when spoken to. If you find that he is looking at you hard, meet his eye firmly and yet with humility. I'll tell you this—that of the thousands who would gladly have

served him on this mission, it was you whom he was most ready to trust."

There was a sudden cry from a member of the crew, and I looked up, to see the gray streak of something that could have been only a torpedo craft; far away, yet everything about it subtly bespeaking the engine of war.

Monsieur Beau gave an order in Turkish. The swinging mast of the boat was dropped. Several of the crew began to draw a brown fish net from a well in the center of the boat.

The little warship had made a wide circle. I felt that we were being scrutinized.

There was a "*Hooey!*" as part of the net went overboard.

Then the torpedo boat had thrown over her wheel again, and was speeding off at an angle, like a greyhound on a fresh scent. Monsieur Beau was giving his orders, and, willing to be alone, to meditate, to enjoy the beauty and wonder of the world as I had never enjoyed its beauty and wonder before, I went up to the very bow of the boat and cast myself down on the gunwale.

We ran into rougher water. A breeze came that stretched the spherical triangle of our mainsail into a rigid curve. The flying spray flashed and sparkled. It was as if we had broken the bonds that confined the other ships, and were rushing far out to a measureless sea pasture that was to be all our own. For all that I could see ahead of us, on the rocking blue-and-silver surface of the gulf, was a buoy with a bell on it that clanged dolefully, while it danced with comic speed. Then, over beyond this, I saw something else—a blunt pole, gray, that seemed to move of its own accord and not in accordance with the waves.

I cast a hurried look back of me. I saw Kemal jerking a green package toward the tip of the mast. The package broke into a green flag that fluttered

there straight ahead, as if it, too, were looking at the thing I had seen.

I looked again. The blunt pole had mounted higher, had brought something up with it, like a whale awash, as breath-taking as any cachalot and ten thousand times more deadly to its enemies.

It was a submarine.

CHAPTER IX.

That I survived that trip is obvious, else I should not now be writing these memoirs. But I tell you there were hours when I was convinced that my end had come. Fear is all habit and training, even for the most timid of us. You who dwell in the cities do not shudder every time a street car goes past, although the street car may be an agent of death. Nor does a native of the Indian bush get heart disease every time he sees a cobra. By the same token, I suppose there are men on earth to-day, many of them, who doze and dawdle and think of pie while living on a submarine.

But I was new to the test, and the attendant circumstances were extraordinary. We were going to run past or under I don't know how many battleships, all keyed up to the highest point for swift, unerring business. We were going to buck baffling currents in which copper globes full of annihilation swam like blind jellyfish.

I had read about this sort of thing in the Greek press, and it had appealed to whatever I had of imagination. The current down through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles sets forever outward, bearing off the waters of the great rivers that flow into the Black Sea. And the moment I saw the submarine, I knew that this was the means my grandfather had provided for bringing me to Constantinople. Through that deadly drift we should have to pass.

I thought of all this as I watched the men of our sailing caique help those who came up out of the belly of the sea monster to transfer the stores we had brought. I surrendered hope.

The crew of the submarine were almost completely naked. They looked brave and hard—light of complexion, dark of complexion; there was even a redhead, a Kizilbash—and they all spoke Turkish. They laughed a good deal, as if the sunlight and the smell of the open air had gone to their heads. Almost entirely naked, too, was the officer in command. His only insignia of office was the air of authority he wore.

He addressed Monsieur Beau with profound respect. They held a conference apart. Several times I saw the officer cast a hasty, curious look in my direction, but I pretended not to notice. Then Monsieur Beau presented him.

Nemira Bey!

He was dressed in thin duck trousers and a cotton undershirt, but he was every inch the polished gentleman; under thirty, blue-eyed, five feet eight, nimble and strong, speaking the French not of the boulevards, but of the officers' mess. Him, also, I took it, my grandfather had selected for this mission of trust; and I thought none the worse of my grandfather for that.

One of Nemira Bey's men who had been told off for lookout duty let out a low hail, and immediately there was a scurry of fresh haste. That troublesome torpedo boat was again pointed our way—a smudge of smoke above, a smudge of foam below.

The submarine that lolled, awash, there in front of us, was of an earlier type than those developed since the war began, less quick to get under water, once she had her back in the sunshine. But Nemira Bey gave an order as cool and efficient as the click of steel. He turned to Monsieur Beau with a salute, the same for me, and I was following

Monsieur Beau onto the resilient back of the thing.

Adieu, Reshad! Farewell, my giant! He was to return to Turkey by another route.

The conning tower was high and square. We went over the steel wall of it and down through what might have been the manhole of a sewer. We found ourselves in a miniature power house with a smell of warm oil about it. There were a couple of earnest engines hard at work under the unflinching attention of a member of the crew.

The rest of the crew came down. There was a swish and a chug of steel. The light changed to the unnatural glow of electric bulbs. As if they were human, the engines stopped and let a pair of purring dynamos take up the task.

The boat trembled. I felt a slight sinking sensation at the pit of my stomach, such as I experienced on my first ride in an elevator. I knew, without being told, that we were no longer visible from the surface of the sea.

Thrills? There were no more thrills about it, after the first shock of it was over, than there would have been about sitting in the tight-closed engine room of any power boat—not until the first mishap occurred.

There was a sort of triple-deck coffin that might have been called an officers' cabin. Monsieur Beau crept into one of the berths and I into another. My nerves were on the jump, and, while I felt no desire for sleep, I was thoroughly aware of my need for it. The preceding night I had slept not at all, save in fragmentary snatches aboard the lateen. The night before that—my last night in Athens—had seen me at my texts until almost dawn. I forced myself to lie still. The boat was a cradle. The dynamos sang a cradle song. The breathless air was as the water of Lethe.

Still numb with sleep, I heard Ne-

mira Bey and Monsieur Beau in conversation.

In case of accident, said Nemira Bey, there would be nothing to indicate the nationality of the boat. There wasn't a uniform or a flag aboard. So far as appearances went, the men could pass as citizens of almost any land. Not one of them would talk. The secret would be kept. As for the ship, her marks of identification had all been removed, her papers, her—

I had listened thus far, still in that peculiar zone which is neither sleep nor waking, when I was startled into complete wakefulness by a sound right against my ear. If I had been asleep in a boiler and some one had rumbled a load of iron down the side of it, that would have been the sound. The submarine moves with its eyes shut under the sea. We had run afoul of something. I was aware of that even before I heard Nemira Bey clip out an order.

There was a sagging lull. The scrap-iron pound moved aft.

"Provided that it is not an anchor chain," said Monsieur Beau.

"It can't be an anchor," said Nemira rapidly. "We're in three hundred fathoms."

"Then, it is——"

"Careful, effendi!"

Nemira Bey was among his men. They, also, had heard that sound. It is possible that they were even more alert to the danger it presaged than I myself was, but I saw no sign of nervousness.

I absorbed a good deal of information in the few minutes that followed. It wasn't so much what Monsieur Beau told me, but I was like a sea urchin with a thousand spines a-quiver in search of information that no ordinary senses could bring me.

We had been running under water for several hours. We were still in a danger zone, where discovery by the

prowling scouts of the Allies or of Greece might mean our journey's end. We couldn't very well come up until night to discover what it was that had grappled us. In the meantime, any movement at all would be filled with nameless danger. Sundown was still two hours away.

We lay there. We waited. No parsonage, this, and yet such calm!

I saw two members of the crew settle down to a checkerboard about four inches square. I heard another picking at some sort of a lute—just three notes, but filled with all the minor harmony of the East. I looked into a tiny cage plastered like a swallow's nest under steel eaves, and I saw a number of white mice. They were as if disconsolate—slow, apathetic.

There was a flaming red sunset when we came up. Off to the east of us three cruisers steamed northward in the direction of the Dardanelles. We were taking the risk of their discovering us. We had to. One of the white mice was dead. The others were gasping. And all the time we knew that that metallic thing was clinging to us, clogging our movements, ready, perhaps, at the first contrary movement on our part, to strike at us like a roused snake.

Over the slippery back of the submarine Nemira Bey ran aft with three of his men. Not even the stimulus of seeing the sky again and of filling my lungs with oxygen could quite arm me against what followed. It was the one bit of information that I hadn't picked up with those queesting spines of mine, although Nemira Bey and Monsieur Beau, and doubtless all the members of the crew, had known it from the first.

We were entangled in the chain of a mine that had broken loose. Had it touched us—*good night!*

So I thought.

I stood there on the swaying back of the submarine, holding on to the slender guide rail that ran from stem to

stern. Around the twin propellers of the craft, Nemira Bey and his men were working with hammers and steel saws. Tugging at the chain was that floating volcano. When would it lose patience and come up to finish us?

The red went out of the sky. The darkness deepened.

"Unfortunate," said Monsieur Beau calmly, as he turned his rosary in his fingers.

I made some inane remark about not wishing to disappoint my grandfather.

Just then there was a flash like lightning. One of those distant cruisers had begun to use its searchlight. The light was back again. This time it held us like an accusing finger. The searchlights of the other ships pronged us, too.

"*Seen-es-Sherif!*" cried Nemira, as one would say, "Teeth of the Prophet!" He was referring to a certain famous relic, and it was the only time that I ever heard him swear.

He could scarcely have been blamed for it. The words had but passed his own teeth when there came a bark of distant thunder. Not more than a hundred yards away a fountain of white water rose in the blinding light.

They were feeling out our range.

CHAPTER X.

There is a sort of blind intelligence about inanimate things. The same sort of intelligence that tangles a fish line into knots no brain could devise had been at work here. There were perhaps fifteen fathoms of chain attached to the mine. The very end of it had come into contact with one of the propellers, and this had twisted it between one of the finlike rudders of the craft and the steel skin. There was no getting it free except to saw it. In the meantime, at the other end of the chain bobbed that sphere of metal able to blow a dreadnaught to smithereens.

The first shot from the warships had fallen short. The next one overreached. The third missed us by about sixty feet. Something popped at the side of me, and I saw a rocket scud skyward. It was a petition to wait, wait, until we might explain.

I verily believe that had another shot been fired just then, it would have sunk us or set off that devilish float behind us. Instead, it was a question that came, insistent. One of the searchlights tilted up somewhat, while the other two went out. The tilted searchlight blinked a message in Morse.

There had been a quick passage of words between Nemira Bey and Monsieur Beau. While the searchlight was still blinking, our Turkish friend began to work an electric torch that a seaman handed him. Morse, also; but what could he say?

He was merely playing for time. I was aware of that even before the searchlights were again upon us and the thunder was resumed. There were a dozen fountains spouting about us by this time. The crew were scurrying below. The inwards of the submarine again resumed their pur.

With that satanic ball and chain still bobbing at our leg, we somehow got under way; again plowed slowly down into the depths that were to be our salvation or our doom.

Even with death spouting its spray over me, I could not blame those who had fired upon us; but I knew, as never before—as I had not guessed even when fighting on the Acropolis, or later, when looking into the handsome, sinister face of Bayezid Pasha—what a desperate game this was. Verily, as Monsieur Beau had said, there were many men on the face of the earth at this time who did not consider the value of a human life as balanced against the cause that was dear to them.

Inshallah! So would I be like that.

It was a case of keep ahead as fast as

possible, for should we lag in a current strong enough to bring the mine in contact with our heels, it would be the end of us.

To make matters worse, we were limping badly. We were headed toward one of the most dangerous strips of water that the world has ever known. We had just had a taste of the precision and speed with which the guardians of those waters went about their work of execution. We had escaped only by a miracle. And, added to all this, we were literally tied to death—had death trailing us as a shadow dogs a man.

There comes a time in the life of every man when no amount of thought, no amount of scheming, no amount of worry, will save him; when the only thing to be done is to go ahead, with blind faith, with blind fatalism, if you will. I got a whiff of fatalism then.

"What is undoubtedly is," I said to myself. And straightway I began to assume, both outwardly and inwardly, the poise I so greatly admired in all the others aboard that little playfellow of death.

I met Monsieur Beau's eyes in the dim light of the three-coffin cabin, and I smiled at him.

"Would it not have been more agreeable," I asked, "if we had gone overland?"

"More agreeable, perhaps," he said, "but death would have been more certain; and we must survive to win. That is the only thing for us to think about."

After a couple of hours, we came up again. And there, in the blue darkness of the stars and the occasional flashes of phosphorescence, dim and ghostly, that came from the water where big fishes played—mindless of the war, mindless of the trailing death—Nemira Bey and his men tapped and sawed until they had cut the chain away. Then for a long time we were making all speed on

the surface. Again we were crawling through the depths.

Once in the periscope I saw dimly that we were between two towns, one of which was sprawled out on a sandy flat. It was Chanak-Kalesi, they told me, and I knew that we had already passed one of the locked doors of the Dardanelles. We sank again. We lay long hours in stifling passivity, in a monotony that wore down to nothingness all those instincts of charity and tolerance that men have bred into their being while living in the open air.

"Anything but this monotony!" I cried in my heart. "Rise to the surface, even if it be to challenge the navies of the world; even if it be to barter a thousand lives for a little air and a little variety!"

A good thing that I wasn't in charge of that submarine!

Nemira Bey lost no shred of his patient courage. The men whom he commanded—carefully selected, as I afterward learned—lost no semblance of willingness or humor. They slept. They played. They polished and oiled, and polished again, as if the machinery were some beloved riddle that they were bent on solving within a given time.

Monsieur Beau told his beads. He studied me with contemplative eyes. He talked much to himself, as is the way of the old, who carry a heavy weight of memory—associate much with those who are dead and gone.

I awoke from one of my numerous periods of physical torpor bordering on sleep to find myself, this time, thrilled with a sort of nameless expectancy. Not a sound reached me save the superhuman drone of the tireless dynamos and the indescribable whisper of the sea. The boat, softly cradled, had come to a stop.

What had happened?

Then it was as if I were in a ship with a crew of madmen, who talked in whispers, laughed in whispers, prayed

and exclaimed in whispers. It was so eerie that it was pleasant. It was a relief, at least, from that killing monotony.

Monsieur Beau leaned down, and I saw his face. It was working with a joy that could easily have expressed itself in tears.

"*Nous sommes là!*" he said. "We are there!"

I started to climb toward the open hatch. Before I reached it, I felt a breeze on my face. It brought with it the smell that wide waters have at night, and something else—a faint, queer, aromatic whiff as of cloves and rose leaves, of coffee and tobacco, all mixed up together. Imagination, doubtless; but I have that scent in the very soul of me at the present time, and I shall have it there always.

I was out on the deck.

It was very dark at first. Then the stars emerged in a sky that was the bluest night sky I had ever seen. Lower down—but not very low—emerged a black contour. I saw a wide dome. I saw the spikes of dim minarets.

Monsieur Beau slipped an arm about me. He patted me on the shoulder.

"Stamboul!" he murmured. "Stamboul!"

Redhead appeared. He had received a whispered order from Nemira Bey. He grasped my hand, said something in Turkish that I knew to be a farewell. I pressed his hands. We were as brothers, these Turks and I.

He slipped down into the water and swam away—to bring a *caïque*, said Nemira Bey.

There was a rumble of cannon far to the north. Over there, somewhere on the Black Sea, Russia was at work. To the south—surely not more than a mile away—there was an echoing explosion. The Allies were busy with their aeroplanes.

Out of the near darkness a rowboat came gliding, black and swift.

CHAPTER XI.

There is a glamour about Constantinople, even in peace times; so they say. So there must be. Europe and Asia and Africa are in contact there, and never quite stable. They touch and grind. So do the past, the present, and the future. So do the Jews, the Mohammedans, and the Christians. So do the black, the yellow, and the white. So do God, the devil, and man.

It didn't need the night, it didn't need the war, it didn't need my own tremulous state, to heighten the impression. Here was a city that the nations had coveted for more than a thousand years. She lay there in the darkness, surrounded by her glittering water, her lurid aura of mystery and sin, while ten million young men spilled their blood and their breath for possession of her—as they had done in the past, as they would do again, however this war went.

I felt all this as our silent boat nosed along an unlighted ship, from which a complicated murmur of pain and grief went out. It was a troopship, back from somewhere with a freight of wounded.

Following that bomb from an aeroplane—if such it was—there had been a sweeping play of half a hundred searchlights against the emptiness of the sky, a bark of protesting guns, then darkness again. But the silence was definitely gone. The granddaughter of old Babylon was awake and alert. The murmur and moan I had heard from the troopship had spread to fill all earth and heaven. So it seemed.

Turkish boatmen are among the best in the world. They are the elder brethren of the Venetians, just as the Turkish caique is elder brother to the gondola. The oarsman of the craft in which Monsieur Beau and I were seated sent the boat darting from shadow to shadow, and made no sound of his own.

And from the water all around us, from the dimly seen city, and from the depths overhead, came that hum of life and death that we had heard from the troopship—a monotonous drone, with a squeaking high note now and then; with a bar of melancholy music, a babble of voices, the rumbling sigh of escaping steam.

Through the deep darkness cast on the water by the shadow of an almost endless palace we made our way to a landing stage of slimy stone. Here we got out. Then, while the boatman waited, Monsieur Beau made his way cautiously to an almost invisible door.

Right here, I reflected, many a harem beauty, sewed up in a sack, had been dropped into the black waters, many a prying foreigner had met a similar fate. The water gurgled and chugged. The drone and boom of the city had become a death song.

Into such reflections, and to an accompaniment of such weird music, appeared a creature who was a personification of such things. I had often read about the eunuchs of the East—their subtlety, their not infrequent courage and strength and mental force. This was one of them. It was he who had opened the door to Monsieur Beau's knock. I heard him whisper, "*Bismillah!*"—"In the name of Allah!"—with a little thrill.

He was a good six feet tall, although his body was short and broad, like a gorilla's. His legs were what gave him his height, and his arms were long in proportion. They were as long as Reshad's. Moreover, the fez on his broad, flat head was higher than any fez that I have ever seen. He was jet black. He had a spatulate nose and an elaborate, mobile mouth, and a pair of shifty little eyes, wide apart. Most eyes you can look into, as into anything having depth. His eyes had no depth. You could see no deeper than the surface of them, and from the surface they

looked back at you. His name was Kavak.

He was dressed in a tight and simple robe, such as any Old Turk might wear, reaching from chin to feet like a cassock, dark blue or black, but it didn't hinder his movements. He went out to the water's edge with the limber agility of a black snake. He dismissed the boatman. He gave a look about. He ambled back. We followed him through the all but invisible door, and it shut behind us with a sucking gasp.

Kavak flashed an electric torch, and I saw an empty corridor of vaulted, whitewashed stone. Then there was darkness again for a long time, while Kavak and Monsieur Beau talked with each other in Turkish. I couldn't understand, nor did they apologize. I had a feeling that all this was a matter of life and death. At last Monsieur Beau reached out through the darkness, and his hand gave a reassuring pressure on my arm.

"Your grandfather, the *cadi*," he said softly, "has anticipated our arrival, and has come to a certain villa not very far from here. It is late, yet still there is a chance that he'll want to see you right away. Kavak is one of his most devoted followers. It was Kavak who brought your grandfather in safety and secrecy across the Bosphorus. Kavak tells me that there are many in Stamboul who would be glad to know that your grandfather is here."

"I'll be glad to pay him my respects," I said.

"And how will you address him, when you see him?"

"I shall say, '*Bon soir*,' as I would to any one," I averred.

"I believe you'd better kiss his hand," said Monsieur Beau.

"That's as it may be," I answered. "But I can't, for the life of me, see that it matters very much."

"Every little thing matters," said Monsieur Beau breathlessly. "I hadn't

expected to find your grandfather in Stamboul. I thought that he would still be across the Bosphorus; that there would be plenty of time to coach you as soon as I learned how things were developing here in the capital."

"It seems to me," I ventured, "that if I've shown myself ready to risk my life on his mere nod, there's no reason why he should stand on ceremony. If he isn't satisfied, the sooner he says so, the better; and the better I'll be satisfied."

I might have said more, but the pressure of Monsieur Beau's fingers somehow hinted to me that I had said enough. At the same time, I was painfully conscious that Kavak had been letting no syllable escape.

"Let's get out of here," I said.

Kavak flashed his torch again, and by it we got our direction. We groped along an interminable wall.

It was as if we had come to the banks of another stream, when, at last, we emerged from that place. It was a river of men. There were thousands of them marching down an adjacent street, in the direction of the sea. It was a brown torrent, rumbling, clinking, with every now and then a guttural command.

We stood in the shadows and watched.

Such might have been the followers of Genghis Khan, for the majority of the faces that rolled on in the fitful light of a spluttering arc lamp were brown, almost Mongolian—fresh drafts from Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, from Syria and Irak Arabi.

There was the throb of a drum to a quick, odd tempo, perhaps a quarter of a mile away, and gradually the human river began to hum. It didn't sing. It hummed. And such a refrain I had never heard before. It was a song that was born of deserts and camels, age-old thirst and hunger, fierce forays, and passions as hot and swift as lightning.

Kavak had put a fez on my head. Had it been a hat, I would have uncovered. That song was a hymn. It was more than that—it was like all the hymns of the world and all the national songs of the world rolled into one. It was a song wrung out of the heart of a race as old as Adam and Eve.

Through other streets, which were dark and deserted—for it was very late—we followed a course that I was never afterward able to trace. We came to the gate of one of the numerous cemeteries that make old Stamboul as a place of many parks. The cemetery was shadowed to blackness by dark cypress trees. Kavak shuddered as we passed through it, and murmured something that, for all I know, was a charm against the jinn and vampires that abounded there. We came to another gate, which Kavak unlocked with a hand that shook, and we were in a garden.

A dozen dusky figures came running toward us. At a word from Kavak, they let out subdued cries of joy, almost prostrating themselves as they seized Monsieur Beau's hands.

Slaves, most likely, to act like that! I wondered if they were the property of my grandfather. But what enthralled me most, curiously enough, was not that I was here in this place, in such strange company. No. What enthralled me was the smell of roses that filled the garden, the mysterious light of a latticed window.

CHAPTER XII.

There were other things of a nature to make me think. The house in the garden was old, exceedingly old and shabby, almost a ruin. Yet, from all that I had thus far seen and heard, I knew that this grandfather who had sent for me was both rich and powerful. No grandfather, perhaps, had ever been at such pains to bring a descendant

of his from one part of the world to another. One would have thought that he would have been there to welcome me with open arms. Yet he wasn't. He was nowhere in sight.

"Where is he?" I asked.

Monsieur Beau made a slight gesture with his hand.

"Be patient," he whispered. "I have certain things to tell you."

We followed the slaves through a winding path hedged close with tangled roses. I heard the silvery splash of a fountain. Back of us the black cypress trees towered aloft. Ahead of us was the ruined house—of stucco, plaster, and wood, two stories high; and in the second story that lighted, mysterious lattice.

Kavak took charge of me at the front door of the tumble-down old mansion, and not until then did I learn that he could speak English, after a fashion.

"Honorable wash. After, eat," he suggested.

"Right-o!" I answered.

He led me to a room about twenty feet square, around three sides of which ran a broad diyan. The floor was thick with carpets, and there were other carpets against the wall—lustrous and soft in the light of a chandelier of flickering oil cups. There was no other furniture, no pictures—only a few frames containing ornamental texts in Arabic.

Kavak went away, and two Africans came in. One carried a bossed copper basin as large as the top of a dining-room table, and the other had a copper ewer. Good-naturedly enough, they stripped me. They stood me in the basin. They poured their water over my head, and rubbed me down. A third African appeared with a complete outfit of fresh garments. The most comfortable clothing in the world—the clothing of a Turk; and you never have to worry about the fit. Ah, me! To think that the Young Turks should have tried to change all this, to import the

collars and the starch, the tight coats and hampering trousers, of the West, when already their sartorial problems were so perfectly solved! A soft and collarless shirt, baggy trousers, with an ample sash, an upper garment like a silken bath robe, soft woolen stockings, and no shoes!

I curled up on the broad divan in an outfit like that, and ate the food they brought me on a tray—rice and mutton, fruit and honey cakes, all of an exquisite flavor.

There was nothing to read. There was nothing to do but wait and think. The influences of the bath, the food, the quiet, were all narcotic. I could just reach the oil cups in the chandelier. I blew them all out save one.

I curled myself up on the divan. I slept.

That last remaining oil cup had gone out, or had been put out, when I was awakened by a hand on my shoulder. It was absolutely dark.

"Don't move!" came a whisper. "Don't make a noise! It is I!"

I had recognized the voice as Monsieur Beau's.

"What's up?" I whispered.

"Your grandfather has seen you," he answered. "He is satisfied."

"When? Where?"

"While you were bathing—and afterward."

The answer was so amazing that I could merely hold my breath. Finally I got out a syllable or two of resentment. The thing was so grotesque, however, that even my resentment was overshadowed by my surprise.

"He is like that," said Monsieur Beau in extenuation. "Don't be angry with him; and, above all, when you meet him, take everything as a matter of course."

"When will that be?"

"There's no telling, yet. He has much to think about."

"Even if he is my grandfather, he is beginning to annoy me," I ventured. "Does he think about the inconvenience I have already suffered on his account?"

"You must make allowances—very great allowances," said Monsieur Beau. "He is old. He is peculiar. He has very much to think about. He has a great dream, and remember always that you are the one to whom he will intrust its fulfillment."

"What is this dream?"

"He will tell you."

"But when?"

"All in good time."

I was reflecting. I admit that I felt pretty sick. I said so. I proposed calling him to account.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Monsieur Beau. "Not so loud! And, for the love of God, make no such suggestion in his presence, or he might have your throat cut—bring ruin on all of us! Trust in me, my son. But the *cadi*—he is capable of anything at times."

"My throat's my own," I answered. "I'm not afraid of him. And another thing—I have a right to exercise my judgment, too; and should he think that—"

There was a warning hiss. I could feel the tenseness of my old friend as he listened.

"I'm afraid he is awake," he breathed.

He pressed my hand. He slid away. I lay there scarcely breathing until he was back again.

"I wanted to warn you against Kavak, against every one," he said. "Where the *cadi* goes, there goes a swarm of spies. But the *cadi* himself is all right, when understood, when treated with discretion. *Tiens!* He is the shadow of Abdul-Hamid, as Abdul-Hamid is the shadow of God. Remember that."

I was so distressed in my mind that I didn't know what to say, didn't know what to do.

"The shadow of Abdul-Hamid!" "He has a great dream!" "He might have your throat cut!" And this was what awaited me after that flight from Athens, that deathly cruise through the forbidden waters of the Dardanelles! "He is capable of anything!"

"My friend?" I whispered.

"I am here."

"I think I'll sneak out of here," I said; "make my way over to the American embassy. I'll be able to find it alone."

There was a longish silence.

"Son," said Monsieur Beau, "you may do that, and I'll help you to do it—but it'll break my heart to see—to see you go! This is a marvelous game. No marvelous game is easy or safe. I wanted to look over the field before disturbing you. I've been a long time away from Stamboul. You have a chance to win—to win stakes that would have tempted Napoleon!"

Monsieur Beau again went away, and this time he did not come back again. Sleep had left me. I stared at the black dimness overhead. Presently I got up and silently made my way toward the single door of the apartment.

At first, I saw nothing there. I was bent on taking a stroll in the garden. I was about to cross the sill when I was conscious of a movement at my feet. There was the flash of an electric torch. I looked down, half blinded, into the blinking mask of one of the negroes.

CHAPTER XIII.

I went out anyway. It wasn't easy. The fellow lying there across the threshold motioned me back; and then, feeling hurt and angry, I persisted. At that, the black let out a squeak, and others came. Kavak was one of the group, and, recognizing him as an interpreter, I told him of the innocence

of my intentions. Then from the darkness somewhere came a voice, soft, measured, that made every one there grab for me as if I had been the most precious thing in the world.

But out I went, in spite of them all, panting, with skinned knuckles and a bump on my cheek. It had all happened so suddenly that I was thunder-struck. I didn't know whether to laugh or pray.

Under the starlight I stood, in the fragrance, in the blue limpidity, breathing deep, hot, striving to calm my jumping nerves and the soul of me.

I was recalling the voice that I had heard from the end of the dark hall. I had scarcely noticed it at the time. It came back to me now like a cold, cold breath. That had been the voice of my grandfather. There had been death in that voice. It was one of the strangest voices I had ever heard. It was soft. It was feeble. And yet how those menials had responded to it! They had been infused with fire. They had been electrified.

The beauty and fragrance had gone out of the night. I sought for a long time, vainly, to bring them back.

"He would cut your throat," Monsieur Beau had said.

I knew that this was true. It is all very well to be ready to die, to face the dark angel with a smile. It is another thing to be in a black lane full of corners, and not to know around which corner the angel waits.

My grandfather had never ceased to be a friend of the deposed sultan's—a disciple as well as a friend, most likely. Now, the sultan has ever been officially—and privately, too, I doubt not—the *Hunkyar*—as one would say, "The Slayer of Men." It was a killer whose voice had come to me. For all its feebleness, it had had a grisly grate to it, such as I had never heard before, but such as any man would recognize, as a

young secretary bird recognizes instinctively its first snake.

The stars flamed bright. From the city came that drub and throb that I had heard when first crossing the waters of the Bosphorus—the pulse of a mighty organism, inscrutable and vast.

I found a bench in the shadows. I sat there, dreaming, speculating, trying to think. With a start, I perceived, after an interval, that there was something doing at the farther end of the inclosure. I couldn't see very distinctly just what it was, but I took it to be some sort of a fight between servants. Quite enough of that sort of thing had I had for all time, and I decided not to interfere. Still, with the interest in things pugnacious common to all men, I suppose, I watched the affair, as much as I could see of it—just a flickering medley of black shadows, of heavy breathing, blows, an occasional whimper.

None of my affair, surely.

Then some semblance of order came out of the confusion, and I saw two of the recent combatants dragging along a third. Grotesque it was—those three so intent on their little hatreds, their little wars, there in the midst of a Turkish rose garden.

The trio disappeared into the doorway of the villa. The door closed upon them. The villa once again took on the semblance of a house that hadn't been occupied for a hundred years. No sound came from it, no light. Even that magic casement on the second floor, which had so stirred my imagination but a short time before, was now unlighted, dismal, ghostly, dead.

Then some premonition made me sit up, listening with all my ears and my mouth.

Somehow or other, I was seeing again the three men who had disappeared. There had been something humorous about them, yet I found myself shiver-

ing as I thought of them now. Not for long, though. Ah, no! There wasn't time for that. What followed came too suddenly, too revealingly. It sprang at me out of the silence and the darkness, right out of that haunted house. A shriek! Oh, the very most blood-curdling shriek that I had ever heard—that, God grant, I shall ever hear.

While I had been sitting there, the two ruffians who had passed me had been taking in that third unfortunate to be murdered. I tell you, my heart was pounding. I made to get up, but it was several seconds before I could unbend my legs. When I started to walk, I tottered slightly—just to show you how deeply I was affected, what sort of a shriek that was.

I climbed the two steps to the door of the villa as if there had been weights on my feet. I thrust myself into the hall by sheer physical compulsion. The same sort of will power was what carried me on past my own door to the extreme end of the place. There was a locked door there. I knocked on it. Silence was the only answer at first. I knocked again.

"Well, well?" came that feeble voice. It spoke English. It pronounced the *w* like *v*. But what followed was in French: "Who is it that knocks at my door at this time of night?"

"I am Monsieur Summerville," I answered. "And just now I heard a cry."

I was shaking like a leaf.

"Well, well?" the voice trailed feebly. "It wasn't you, nor was it I, my son. And let us thank God for that."

I heard him ramble off into that Lord's Prayer of the Moslems—"In the name of Allah, the compassionate Compassioner—"

I regained my room. I committed my soul to my Maker. I fell asleep to the chant of a muezzin calling the faithful to the first prayer of the Moslem day.

CHAPTER XIV.

When I awoke, I saw by the slant of the sun through the shuttered window that it was almost noon. The room was cool enough, but I could tell that the day was hot from the way the trees stood still, from the way the air wavered over the brown roofs of a near-by shed. They had been watching me, those black attendants who came forward with their basin and ewer, but I cared little enough. A bath and a breakfast, after such a sleep as that, and I should be fit for anything.

I had about made up my mind to flee.

My own shoes had been taken away, along with the clothing that I had worn at the time of my arrival, and none had been supplied me to take their place. I couldn't very well go trapesing about Constantinople in my stocking feet—could I?—and I knew very well that I could never walk barefoot over cobbles such as I had seen on my way to the villa.

I'll tell you how I solved the difficulty. I stopped one of those Turkish-speaking darkies who were so numerous about the place, and I took his shoes from him and slipped them on myself. "Slipped" I use advisedly. There were no backs to the things, and to keep them on one had to be perpetually cramping up one's toes and scraping one's feet on the ground.

The process was simple enough—the theft, I mean—but I am persuaded that it was this that kept me from carrying out my plan. There could have been only one reason why I should want shoes. Word spread. I was standing in the corridor, just outside my room, not quite sure in which direction to turn, when there was a click at the door through which, last night, I had heard the voice sinister of that "Shadow of Abdul-Hamid," my host. I turned.

I turned, and I felt all the fine young courage that had come to me during

my sleep, my bath, and my breakfast, fairly squirting out of me from every pore.

"You are the *cadi*?" I faltered.

"*Oui, oui!*"

"And I am Monsieur Summerville."

"*Mais oui! Mais oui!*"

The man who had appeared at the door had not even deigned to lift his eyes. He was old. He was stooped. His movements were very slow, but, somehow or other, they suggested the slowness of caution, of suspended decision, of latent violence. A swarthy face, a white beard, a fez that came down to his ears—his back was toward me, at first, and he turned slowly—a longish, curved nose, heavy white eyebrows. He stood there for several seconds, with his head bowed—humble, one might have said, yet tremulous, with a fine, swift shake about him like that of a silent dynamo. And I was wondering why he didn't favor me with a glance, raise his eyes, when—good Lord!—I caught a gleam under those heavy eyebrows of his.

And there he had been looking at me all the time!

He raised his face, threw back his head. It might have been merely to ease his neck, but there was something fierce and sharp about it—the sudden shift and glance of a caged eagle. He walked with a gold-headed ebony walking stick. He was dressed in a frock coat and European trousers, but he wore neither collar, scarf, nor waistcoat. Very clean he was, however.

There was a slight impediment in his speech, but the French that he used was otherwise perfect.

"You have been thinking me a sorry host," he said. "You have been thinking me a sorry host. Ah, but when one is old!" He wavered this out. Suddenly he roared: "Take off your shoes! Come here and salute me! Is it not that I am your grandfather?"

I kicked off the wretched slippers I

had filched. I was in front of him. I caught the hand he extended and pressed it to my breast. His eyes were upon me. They were brown, like Monsieur Beau's, but there was a touch of madness in them, far different from the contemplative calm in my French friend's eyes.

"So you're the cub?" he said. "Lion cub" was what he really said—"lion ceau"—and it flattered me.

I was moved to tell the truth.

"I was but now contemplating flight."

"Follow me," he grated, in that voice that had sent the cold chills already down my back, and, somehow, I obeyed.

He led me into a room at the front of the house. It was large, furnished much as my bedroom was, and it was likewise dim and cool behind closed shutters. "The Shadow of Abdul-Hamid" had not so much as looked at me. He drew himself up on the divan and crossed his legs.

While I still stood there, doubtful, Monsieur Beau entered. He came straight up to our host. He delivered himself of a low salaam.

"*Bon jour! Bon jour!*" said the *cadi* pitifully. "Here is that famous grandson of ours."

Monsieur Beau bowed to me formally.

"Sit you here," said the *cadi*. "And you," he said, drilling me with his malicious eyes, "sit you here."

We were seated on the divan. It was as broad as a bed. Monsieur Beau and the *cadi* were facing each other. I was the apex of the triangle, and I noted the fact that Monsieur Beau and I could not have exchanged a glance without the *cadi's* perceiving it. I was beginning to feel like a bottle of nitroglycerin, but I held my silence. The elders were obviously bent on speech.

"I hope that you find the young man worthy of you," Monsieur Beau was saying. "That he should ever rival your strength and courage, brilliancy of

thought, and mellowness of heart, is, of course, quite impossible."

Could he be serious? I looked at him. The Frenchman had his meditative eyes fixed on the older man gravely. There was no smile on his lips. I looked at the *cadi*.

"I haven't been enthusiastic for this enterprise from the first," I began.

I would have said more, but the Shadow of Abdul-Hamid checked me fiercely.

"Oh, now, young man," he said, "you keep quiet!"

"On the contrary," said Monsieur Beau suavely, yet in a tone that would not admit of contradiction, "over in Athens, when the agents of Bayezid Pasha sought to hold him up, he fought—fought like Eyub under the walls. He left a trail of death behind him."

"He doesn't look it," the *cadi* gibed.

"But I tell you—he's our man," said Monsieur Beau.

"*Inshallah!*"

I met the older man's flickering eyes.

"How much do you know already?" he asked, with a curious mingling of scorn and eagerness.

"Nothing!" I blurted, indignant.

The answer tickled him. I knew it when he again addressed Monsieur Beau, for he used the "thee" and "thou" of extreme familiarity.

"My friend," he said, "verily all that thou hast told me about this young jack-anapes has turned out to be the truth. But why did he, a few minutes ago, seek to run away from us?"

"Don't you remember," Monsieur Beau reminded him, "don't you remember that young wild ass from Irak that we used as a watchdog at the summer palace—how he attempted, at first, to break away, how afterward he served you well? So will he serve us in this present business."

"Tell him about it," said the *cadi*, meditative, stroking his beard with a trembling claw.

"Sultan Abdul-Hamid—and may his name be blessed!" said Monsieur Beau, speaking to me, but with his eyes on the *cadi*—"was a man of great wisdom. When all the rest of modern history is forgotten, his wisdom will still remain a bright tradition. For upward of thirty years he, and he alone, kept his empire afloat while other great empires broke and sank—the Boer empire, the Moorish empire, and the empire of the Persians."

"*Bismillah!*"

"He looked into the future," Monsieur Beau went on. "There wasn't a plan of the Young Turks that he didn't foresee. He was as ready as ever to bow to the Rod of Kismet, but, at the same time, he took his precautions. From his own personal wealth he set a certain sum aside——"

"A trifling sum," the *cadi* murmured.

"——and deposited it in the Banque de France at Paris."

"It's all that has saved my life," the old *cadi* broke in.

"You mean the life of his majesty," said Monsieur Beau.

"Don't interrupt!" barked the *cadi*. "That's what I said. It's all that saved his majesty's life at the time of the revolution. They said, 'Abdul is rich. We have skinned him out of everything he had in the Yildiz Kiosk, but there still is the golden nest egg that he has in the Banque de France. If we kill him, we shall be unable to get our hands on that. The money will go to his heirs—to his son.' So they carried him off to Saloniki—alive, alive, and all of the dogs ready to lick his hand."

"Where's the sultan now?" I asked.

"When Saloniki fell to Greece," said Monsieur Beau, "they brought his majesty back to Stamboul——"

"And tried again to wring the money from him," the *cadi* put in. "But he refused. He knew that once he no longer had that money at his command,

he would die. Poisoned coffee! Poisoned coffee! Poisoned coffee!"

He was mumbling. Monsieur Beau resumed his narrative.

"They finally moved his majesty beyond the Bosphorus—where he still is, spending his time in complete seclusion, for the purposes of meditation and prayer."

"Were he to appear again," the Shadow of Abdul-Hamid suddenly cried, in a voice so thrilling with strength and exultation that I could scarcely believe my ears, "were he to appear again, many are they who would greet him as their caliph. Here, let me tell the young man."

The old gentleman was sitting up straight. His eyes were no longer flickering, no longer furtive. Not Suleiman the Magnificent could have looked more imperial. He made me forget all that had just happened. His voice, while lower, continued thrilling and clear.

"It will save lives," he said. "It will save treasure. It will save Turkey's place in Europe. Jean and I have worked it out together. What are the chancellories of the world when compared to us? *N'est-ce pas, Jean?* We will have revenge on our enemies, the enemies of the faith, the enemies of the world. This is it: We'll get our gold from Paris. We'll scatter it where it will do the most good. Ah, not for many a long day has there been any baksheesh about, has there, Jean? We'll start such a revolution as Turkey has never seen before. We'll clean out the traitors who've sold their country to the *giaours*. For our part, we'll negotiate with the Allies. We can trust France. She's the only country that we can trust. She kept the gold intact. *Oui, oui!* Turkey and France will go hand in hand when we open the Dardanelles, chase the new friends out, and call the old friends in!"

The old man was almost chanting. I

myself could scarcely repress a cry of astonishment and enthusiasm.

"The time has almost come," said Monsieur Beau. "Now is the time to negotiate with the Allies. By the time we get the gold here from Paris, the revolution will be ripe. The people can't be fooled any longer. They are exploited, killed, by those not of the faith——"

"By *giaours, giaours!*" thrilled the *cadi*. "And they're all of the same dirt."

"Oh, I don't know," I protested. "I'm an American. Monsieur Beau is a Frenchman. And you yourself, whatever your present position may be, whatever your relations with Abdul-Hamid may be——"

"Hold!" cried Monsieur Beau.

The *cadi* was tremulous again.

"Let him talk, Jean," he said plaintively. "He's right. He's young, and he's a fool!"

"And I might as well say now," I went on, "that there's one thing about this plan that I don't like. The plan is splendid. Please God, and we'll put it through. With the Allies in possession of Constantinople, even under Turkey's flag, there'd be a hasty period to some of this slaughter. But there's Abdul-Hamid."

The old *cadi* didn't move, except to give a slight lurch, to flick his eyes at me.

"What about him?" he asked.

Monsieur Beau coughed, but I paid no attention.

"In spite of what Monsieur Beau has said about him," I persisted, "and in spite of the fact that your honor has been his friend for so many years, you can't deny it that Abdul is known up and down the earth as 'Abdul the Butcher.' That's the fact. And I don't want to have anything to do with putting him back on the throne."

"Misapprehension," said Monsieur Beau gravely, with his eyes on the *cadi*.

"There was no empire in the world where greater tolerance was shown foreigners than in the Turkey of Abdul-Hamid. Constantinople is filled with them right now—Italians, English, Greeks, Jews. So with Smyrna, Bagdad, Jerusalem. And *French!* French is still the familiar language of Turkey's great men, those who will control her destiny when the war is over; it is the language that Abdul-Hamid, the Shadow of God, will use to promulgate new guarantees for the world's peace and brotherhood."

"And, after all, he is old," said the *cadi*. A tear trickled the length of his nose. He plucked it away with a trembling finger. "He is old. All that he wants is to die in the palace of his birth."

"When is it proposed that I leave?" I asked.

There was no answer to the question, either then or later. For, as fast as event had followed event in my life since Monsieur Beau had first mentioned this mission of mine, so fast had development followed development in another man's destiny.

Bayezid Pasha was back in Stamboul again.

CHAPTER XV.

It was word to this effect that arrived just then, brought by one of the agents of the growing revolution. I saw this agent—a short man, with a serious, pleasant face, clean shaven, dressed as any man might be dressed on Broadway, apart from the *fez* he wore. Not more than five feet two was his height. Did I look at him patronizingly on that account? Most likely. And the Lord forgive me, if I did. And thy spirit forgive me, Hilmi!

A little man! A spy!

He had whispered long to Monsieur Beau, at the door of the room where we were, and I saw him pass through the garden of the villa as he went away. I

saw him pause and cock an ear like a fox terrier. The summer afternoon was droning away. There had been a sound, like distant cannon or distant thunder; but it was neither of these. The sound swelled out again and broke—cheering, the rolling voice of a mob. The little man hurried away, as if this were his affair. Perhaps it was. He was an attaché of the ministry of police, in which Bayezid Pasha was paramount.

"The people! The people!" mumbled the *cadi*. "The wrath of Allah! The voice of the Unknowable!"

"Hilmi Effendi referred to that, also," said Monsieur Beau. "He says that not only will Bayezid Pasha himself seek to precipitate matters, but that the people themselves are apt to get out of hand at any time."

"Where is Bayezid now?" asked the *cadi*.

"Hilmi left him, but half an hour ago, at the palace."

"Isn't the dog already satisfied with what I have promised him?"

"What have you promised him?" I asked.

The *cadi* plucked at his beard.

"It was he who proposed that we bring my nest egg from Paris and use it to overthrow the present government. To seal the compact, I—acting for Abdul-Hamid; you understand that, don't you, young man?—to seal the compact he was to be united to the family of the sultan by marriage. There was a flower of a girl—oh, the flower of the flock—albeit her father was a *vaurien*, and he the sultan's son. Bayezid had seen her face by accident, while she was consorting with Franks, and he coveted her. So I promised her to him. I've got the girl to hand, but— Tell me, Jean, can't we have Bayezid killed?"

"Hilmi reports him heavily guarded since his return from Athens. Bayezid isn't sure, as yet, that you will not select him, after all, for the mission. But

he is suspicious. Somehow, he has learned that I and Monsieur Summerville, your ward, have come to Stamboul in safety, are here in this villa now."

"And I?" The *cadi* jolted out the words, began to shake.

"Hilmi reports that Bayezid still believes you to be secluded beyond the Bosphorus."

"With Abdul-Hamid," I said.

"He'd have me murdered," said the old man.

"Impossible," said Monsieur Beau. "Our friends are gathering. They are in close communication. Still, I should recommend that we send Monsieur Summerville on his way without delay."

"Haste, haste!" murmured the *cadi* complainingly. "And I'm not so sure of this young man."

"Then take another, by all means!" I cried. "I don't see why you don't select a Turk for the job, anyway."

"A Turk might be suspected of other Turks," said Monsieur Beau. "There are many who could be intrusted with the mission, but the complications are too intricate. We've thought it all out. Nor would a German, nor a Frenchman, nor any *giaour* do, save an American, and that American bound, as you are, by loyalty to his grandfather."

"You believe in loyalty to a grandfather, don't you?" the *cadi* entreated.

"Certainly," I said.

"The most sacred thing in the world, isn't it?" the *cadi* persisted. "It's the first commandment in your Holy Writ, isn't it? And you're a minister, aren't you?"

"All that you say is true," I answered. "You've studied me from a distance for a long time. You've had time to look me over. I can plainly see that you are dissatisfied with me. I haven't heard or seen or had a hand in anything but quarrels and murder and intrigue since this affair was thrust upon me. So I am even more dissatisfied than you are, and I don't like to hear you now

talking about the loyalty that I might owe you because you happen to be my grandfather. You'll excuse my saying so, but you've been so long associated with Abdul-Hamid that you're not a bad second to him—you are, indeed, his shadow, in more senses than one."

I said all this. I may have said more. In fact, I'm quite sure I did. I was out of breath by the time I got through.

The *cadi* hadn't lifted his eyes from the carpet of the *divan*.

"But, Jean," he said, "the boy's a fool!"

"Such are beloved of the Prophet," said Monsieur Beau.

"I advise you to turn the whole business over to Bayezid Pasha, after all," I suggested.

"And of the Prophet's lowly vicar," said the *cadi* musingly.

"So I think I'll tell you both adieu," I said.

The *cadi* suddenly seized my wrist.

"My son——" he quavered.

Some one, from the door, called to Monsieur Beau; but before my French friend left, he spoke rapidly in Turkish to the *cadi*. He said his say, whatever it was. He saluted me gravely. He left us there.

"He is right! He is right!" said the old man, with a recurrence of gentle weakness, as soon as we were alone.

"What did he say to you?" I asked.

"That I was to prove to you that what you said of old Abdul-Hamid was not true."

"But it was true," I affirmed.

"This world is a place of deception, of illusions," he retorted. "*Inshallah!* We worship in the past that which we execrate to-day. Who is there to say that the name of Abdul-Hamid, in the future, will not be ranked with that of Jacob, of David, and of Omar, the Prophet's friend?"

"But the dead bear testimony that can't be refuted," I said. "Abdul-Hamid was guilty of killing many men."

"Illusion! Illusion!" said the Shadow softly. "The world has eyes, but it does not see things aright. Only Allah, He knows."

He called a servant, and took his time about ordering what he wanted, questioning the man about many things, apparently. He turned to me.

"You're a Frank," he said enticingly. "Won't you have a little drink? There is some cognac about the place. I dare say there is even whisky."

"Thank you," I said. "I don't use liquors of any kind."

"That's good," he said, almost gayly.

The servant went out. He also had salaamed to the floor. The old *cadi* certainly was an autocrat. The fellow returned with a silver tray, which must have been already prepared, for it was tastefully garnished with sherbets and cakes, fruits and sweetmeats. Kavak himself appeared out of the darkness, in which a person of his complexion could so easily hide. He placed a walnut stand before the old man, and on this the tray was set down.

My mad host waved his hand, and we were alone—or, at least, I believed we were.

The old man ate with a lively appetite, and he invited me to do the same, but I couldn't. I was thinking of the indignities, not to say the insults, to which I had been subjected, from the time, back in Athens, when I had ceased to be a free agent—a master of myself, as I had always imagined myself to be—right on up to last night's squabble with the slaves.

Did he suspect the trend of my thoughts? Most likely he did, for no one ever talked to me more amiably, questioned me with kindlier sympathy, about my life, my expectations. Charming he was—on the surface, at any rate.

"And will you promise your grandfather this," he asked: "not to leave him without fair warning?"

Noblesse oblige!

I answered: "Yes."

He excused himself. He went away. They took the tray away. I sat there, not sure whether or not the strange old madman would return. My eyes had become acute to the shadows. I saw something lying in the corner of the room. I got down from my perch and went over for a closer look. It was the recumbent body of a man—a black man, a slave.

I felt a thrill of horror. Again the shriek of the night before slit the fibers of my brain. For this man was dead. There was no sign of breathing; his black hands were folded on his hollow breast; his eyes were slightly open, with the pupils rolled back. Here was no illusion.

I made my way back to the divan. I sat down there. I drew up my legs. I made myself as comfortable as I could. I would not be frightened. If this was one of the *cadi's* jests, his idea of humor, I would stay right there and confront him with it. But from that figure, recumbent and stiff against the far wall, I could not take my eyes. The longer I looked, the more awful it was.

What if this should happen to me? What if this should happen to Monsieur Beau? After all, death was solemn, hideous.

One hour passed. Two hours. Three hours.

My soul was sick and reeling.

And then that dead man of mine sat up. He yawned. He stretched. He shuffled out. And so did I. There were illusions in the world. The *cadi* had proved it to me.

CHAPTER XVI.

I was a prisoner—a sort of honorary prisoner, if you will, but watched, spied upon, restrained. I wasn't told so. But I had sufficient proof of the fact in the

two days that followed. Indeed, there was no one to tell me anything more than I already knew, except Kavak, and Kavak I didn't care to cultivate. Monsieur Beau had dropped out of sight. The Shadow of Abdul remained aloof.

There were guardians enough—how many I shall never know. Nor were they all blacks; nor were they all menials; nor were they all unfriendly.

There were bearded men, whom I had no difficulty in recognizing as the very cream of Osmanli society—suave, dignified, unruffled, with faces carved by thought and prayer. They came. They went. They looked at me. It wasn't idle curiosity that made them do this. They weren't that kind. It was rather a grave consideration that made me feel not so much a victim as a candidate.

I began to get a fair perspective of the great plot that was weaving here in this stricken empire, a plot in which I was to have a chance to play a rôle. I was interested. I didn't want to run away.

But that wasn't the principal reason. Ah, no! I confess it without shame. There was another reason—one of a kind with all the great reasons in the world since the fall of man.

There was a woman.

The garden surrounding the villa that had now become my home and my prison was not very large, but it was so crowded with trees and shrubbery, with tortuous paths, with a kiosk, a fountain, and it was so submerged in the brooding shade and majesty of the neighboring cemetery, that it seemed much larger than it was. There were nightingales in it. There were swallows under the eaves. There were butterflies and beetles of sorts I had never seen. But, more than all this, it had been filled from the first with a haunting suggestiveness as of something hidden.

There was a mosque in the neighbor-

hood, which I had, thus far, made no attempt to identify. I knew this—that the muezzins of it had such voices as I had never hoped to hear this side of heaven. There were four minarets to the mosque. The tip of only one of them could I see. But five times a day the muezzins sent out their calls to prayer—liquid tenors and baritones that carried and harmonized and rollicked through the air.

"*La Ilaha il Allah!*"—"There is no God but God!" And other things, like that cry at dawn: "Come to prayer, for prayer is better than sleep!"

I wondered if there was an echo in the garden. There must have been. Several times I heard the beautiful notes repeated softly, with a music diviner still.

Once, when I heard this echo, I happened to be unobserved. I clambered to the top of a pile of large flowerpots and peered over an inner wall that cut off a portion of the garden from the rest of it.

I saw her.

She was dressed in white. No girl I had ever seen on Boston Common had been better dressed. Indeed, just as she was, she could have appeared at a Harvard commencement and have attracted no notice save for her singular and compelling beauty.

No, I do not exaggerate. I know—or at least I have been so informed—that the affections ripen rapidly in the warm, soft climate of the Bosphorus. It is only natural for those born and bred there. But I was of sterner, colder stuff. And yet—will you believe me?—at the sight of her I heard a gust of ethereal music. I have heard it ever since when I look at her. I can't sing it, or play it—I can't remember it, even, when she is not about; but real music it is—a combination of the chant of the marching regiments, of the muezzins' call, of the nightingale, of the smell of roses.

Yea, Lord! When I open my eyes after death, may it be to a refrain like that.

Her hair was glossy, heavy and dark, inclined to curl, and as if it had never been shorn, albeit it came to but a little below her shoulders. There was a black band about it, which not only held the hair in place, but likewise a scarlet gem in the middle of her forehead. Her eyebrows were long and straight, which, with her fine, small, aquiline nose, gave her a look of I don't know what of valor. Valor, rather than beauty—that describes her, although there was beauty enough there for Praxiteles—in the slender shape, the careless grace of her poise.

I thought of poor Merika Theotokes, back there in Athens, and, though there was no occasion for it, thought of her somehow brought a certain warmth to my brow and neck.

Besides, the young lady had turned, was looking up at me. She had just plucked a tea rose. It was almost the same shade, I remarked, as her polished finger nails. And she had singularly large eyes—very gray, very calm, very what the French call *troubant*—a wide and delicate mouth, as red as a mouth could be, a broad and delicate jaw.

It was her own perturbed state that brought me to myself. She looked at me for several seconds, as one might look at any uncouth apparition; then she let her glance fall, she colored, she looked up again, she lifted one of her shapely hands to the breast of her frock.

"Give me the rose," I said, as I might have spoken to a child; and, as a child might have done, she obeyed. Now, not the least strange thing about it was that I had spoken in English, and she had understood. And, "Tell me your name," I whispered. Again I spoke English; again she understood.

She looked down at her patent-

leather shoes and at her gray silk ankles. She spoke.

"I know all about you," she said breathlessly. "You're Mr. Summerville—Mr. John Summerville."

"And you?"

"I'm Roxalana."

CHAPTER XVII.

Now, she had spoken English. She had not only spoken English, but she had spoken it with the accent of Boston. Not offensively so, mind you, but—how shall I say it?—touchingly so. Her accent was as beautiful and suggestive of Beacon Street as her clothes were. And yet she was unquestionably, undeniably foreign. But I asked, anyway:

"Are you an American?"

She laughed at that—showed all of her white and perfect teeth. Then she was instantly afraid again.

"No; I am Turkish," she said hurriedly. "Look out! Some one is coming!"

Before I could, or would, duck back out of sight, I got one of the worst shocks of my life, as well as an explanation of those things that had made me marvel.

Had I not been certain that such a thing was physically and morally impossible, I would have sworn that there was my maiden aunt. Coming down the path, dressed in black, reading a book, I saw a prim and elderly woman. She was as American, she was as stiff, and she was as welcome to my sight, as Bunker Hill Monument would have been. In a Turkish harem, forsooth! Shades of the Pilgrims! Spectacled, a ruche about her neck, long-sleeved, slightly lantern-jawed, the sort of a woman who can make great pie, who can nurse the sick, who can defy the powers of hell to shake her serene faith in God and the decencies!

Hide from her! I jumped for her

as a thirsty hart would jump for a water brook. Had she been my mother, I couldn't have been less afraid of her, more sure of her character. Before she saw me, I was over the wall. I ran toward her. I disregarded her squeak.

"What are you folks doing here?" I asked. "Do you want me to get you out?"

The dear old lady went red with indignation. Forgive me! Not old—old only in comparison with Roxalana, was what I meant. She crossed her arms, with a finger between the pages of her book; I think it was Bentley's "Confutation of Atheism." She speared me through her glasses. The end of her nose got red. I should have been dismayed, had I not grown up in the presence of such phenomena, learned how harmless they were.

"Go back this instant where you came from!" she commanded. "Roxalana! How dare you? Hide your face! Get out of sight!"

"It wasn't her fault," I began.

"You're tempting fate," she said.

"Right along," I admitted.

"You're a Summerville," she said.

"Yes; and I refuse to be frightened. What are you, an American woman, doing in a place like this? I fairly reeks of death and intrigue. I ask you again: Do you want me to get you and this?"—I turned, but Roxalana had obeyed orders, had disappeared—"this child——"

"She is no child," said the lady. "If she were, there might be some excuse for you. But she is a woman. She is engaged to be married. I tell you, Mr. Summerville, get right back, quickly, before any one else sees you here." She was whispering.

"Who are you, if you please?" I persisted.

"I am Miss Stickney—Miss Marcia Stickney. There, now! Back with you!"

"I used to know some Stickneys in Boston."

"I dare say. Oh, do not get us all murdered here by your folly!"

I saw Roxalana emerging from the house, wrapped up in some sort of a black cloak and hood—what they call a *charchaf*. I could not see her face. I recognized her by her lightness and grace. And—yes!—my heart would have told me who it was even if I had been stricken blind.

"Say!" I exclaimed. "Honestly, Miss Stickney, if any one tried to lay hands on you, I'd—"

"I know, I know! You're Summer-ville all over. I've heard enough of your exploits since your arrival here. But surely you know enough to know this—that you would be killed if you were discovered in this part of the garden."

"I don't know it," I said. "I'm my grandfather's guest. He hasn't told me I shouldn't jump the wall."

"He is her grandfather, too," said Miss Stickney. "But that wouldn't save you, nor her, nor me." There was no great conviction in her voice. "It was Monsieur de Guise who secured me as Roxalana's companion—governess, if you will. No girl has ever had a more careful upbringing, although, of course, I was forbidden to teach her the religion of Christ. But she is so young! I have never ceased to hope—that is, until— Oh, it is all on account of this dreadful war. We were all living so happily until the war found us; and, with that, all these plots and counterplots!"

Roxalana, swathed in her *charchaf*, drew near. Miss Stickney whispered something in Turkish, rapidly, softly, and Roxalana started back—none too fast, it seemed to me—in the direction of the house. But before she turned, I had pressed that rose to my lips.

"You say she is engaged," I said, tremulously in spite of myself.

"Yes."

"Does she love the man?"

"She has never seen him."

"Never seen him!"

"No. You see, here in Turkey, these affairs are managed differently. She has been betrothed by—by your grandfather—her grandfather—that is to say, the *cadi*."

"Do you mean to say that she is to be handed over to a fellow that she has never seen?"

"Yes."

"And you'll stand for it?"

"I must 'stand for it,' as you express it. It is in accordance with custom, the Moslem law. I have prayed so often that we might save Roxalana from one of those loveless Turkish marriages! She is a daughter to me." Miss Stickney colored. "She is more than a daughter to me."

I was recalling something that I had heard in the course of my interview with the *cadi*; but the thought that came to me was too incredible, too heinous.

"And this man's name——"

"Is Bayezid Pasha."

There was a taste of blood in my throat. It was as I had expected, but the truth, none the less, made me sick.

"He doesn't get her!" I whispered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I had found a trapdoor in the floor of my room under a thickness of three carpets. Under this, there was a pit that appeared to have been filled with lime. I didn't like to think what might have been the other contents of this pit—under a villa very old, in oldest Constantinople, where men, under certain circumstances, have always possessed and exercised the right of life and death over some of their fellows. But under the flooring, toward that part of the garden which had been walled off as part of the *haremluk*, I could see the light. And here was a secret avenue to the one place in the world where

I most wanted to go. It was the route I used that night.

Do you blame me? I had ordered myself shaved and shorn by the fellow who acted as barber for the old cadi's establishment. He had even anointed me—egad!—until I was as sweet and fragrant as a cake of soap.

When I was pretty sure that I was not observed by those secretly watching guardians of mine, I rolled up a rug, wrapped it in a quilt, and placed it on the divan. In a loud voice I announced to Ahmed and Ismael, at my door, that I was about to sleep, and that no one, not though he be the padishah himself, was to disturb me. I closed the door. I listened. I went through my trapdoor. And then, after a shivery and breathless spell, I emerged into the garden of my desire.

Roxalana was there. I found her alone under the rosebushes at the very extremity of the garden. I have always been grateful to Miss Stickney for this. I was no Turk; she knew it. Roxalana was no creature of painted wax; Miss Stickney knew that as well.

Lo, a young man was calling on a young lady, even as it might have been in Boston, my friend. And I know that I was trying to figure out in just what degree we were related. My grandfather was hers, but possibly only by adoption. I mentioned this possibility, said that I hoped it was so.

"Why?" she asked.

I didn't answer. I was thinking of Bayezid Pasha—that man of power, the successful suitor, the man to whom she had been promised.

"I don't want you to marry Bayezid Pasha," I said.

"Why?" she asked.

Again I failed to answer.

She was dressed in white, but her *charchaf* was near. In the blue duskiness of the garden, she could slip that darker garment about her and become almost invisible. It struck me that the

night was a *charchaf*, encircling both of us; and that our faces, like our souls, were invisible to all earth dwellers except each other. It gave to this meeting of ours the same sort of mystery that accompanies the veiled face, the same potentiality for romance and beauty.

There was a bench, a primitive affair, consisting of a plank, worn smooth by long usage, solidly supported by a pair of sycamore trees, and we sat down there together.

Roxalana was grave and tender, as becomes a maiden receiving a caller for the first time in her life.

"I'm twenty-three," I said. "How old are you?"

"Eighteen," she said. "And Miss Stickney says that I'm old enough to make my own decisions."

We were speaking in whispers, yet, I swear, no voice ever sang as her voice did, so started the whole universe to vibrating and beating. It was enough to rouse a nightingale to a warbling trill.

"I'd like to take you to America," I said.

"I should love that."

"By gad, I will!" I said.

"How?" she asked.

"Why," I explained, "it wouldn't be anything very great for a fellow to take his cousin for a voyage, would it?"

"No," she answered, with a little air of something like disappointment.

"You don't appear to be so terribly enthusiastic," I said.

She smiled at me.

"There, how's that?" she asked.

"Great!"

"I wasn't enthusiastic," she whispered, "because—because the trip you mention can never be."

"Why not?"

"First, because of the reason you know."

She was referring to her betrothal.

doing it as delicately as might be; and I didn't have the heart just then to make her come out and say it.

So, "And secondly?" I asked.

"Because—I'm not your cousin at all," she said, with a catch of her breath.

"You're not my cousin!" I exclaimed.

"But haven't we got the same grandfather?"

Roxalana reached out and took my hand. It must have been some idea she had that my feelings might be hurt. I assured her, by bringing her fingers to my lips, that I was ready for anything. She didn't snatch her hand away.

"I've been talking too much," said Roxalana. "Miss Stickney told me not to talk too much, but, if I did, to stick to the learned and religious topics you were interested in."

"How much is three times nine?" I asked.

"Twenty-seven."

"To listen to you say the whole multiplication table would be like listening to that nightingale," I said, quite honestly.

She was so satisfied with this that she hummed a little bar of music, a wonderfully weird and sweet refrain, with a plaintive little twist to it, and all in a minor key.

"My mother taught me that," she said. "My mother was a Circassian—Kerimé Hanoum—and she died when I was nine years old. That is when Monsieur de Guise brought dear Miss Stickney to me. He has always loved Americans."

"He doesn't love me," I laughed.

"Oh, but I'm sure that he does," she assured me.

"However that may be," I said, "I love that song you were singing. I love everything you say."

"Then you will love the words of the song," said Roxalana. "They are by Hafiz:

"When thus I sit with roses on my breast,
Wine in my hand, and the beloved kind,
I ask no more—the world can take the rest.
Even the sultan's self is, to my mind,
On such a planetary night as this,
Compared with me a veritable slave."

Too much! Those words and the music of her whispered accents were like the starlight. They were like the thrill of the nightingale. They were like all the elements of this disquieting tryst of ours, even to the lurking danger of it. My head was turned. I lost my poise.

"You're not going to marry Bayezid Pasha," I declared.

She was a little frightened. I saw her eyes go wide.

"You're not going to marry any one but me," I said.

"My grandfather——" she began.

"Not even if he were the sultan's self!"

"Oh!" she gasped.

"Everything is clear to me," I said.

"Hitherto I saw as through a glass, darkly——"

For the first time she spoke aloud. What a genius for deception they have, these women, even the youngest and purest of them, at times! She signaled me to calm myself.

"And what," she asked, "is the name of that strange blue star—no—there, between the sycamore and the cypress?"

I turned. I saw a dark shadow fluttering in our direction. It was Miss Stickney.

"Roxalana—Mr. Summerville!" She threw the *charchaf* about Roxalana's shoulders, drew it over her head. "Something has happened, something dreadful. The villa's surrounded."

"Why? By whom?"

"By the police—the secret police, most likely. Oh, I don't know what will happen to us all!"

Right there, in Miss Stickney's presence, I slipped my arm about Roxalana's shoulders. I said something

about getting them both to the American embassy; but before I could press the argument home, some one else approached—some one who came running down the garden path with the repressed energy of a cornered lion. It was Monsieur Beau. I never saw any one so completely master of himself when there was such cause for excitement, not to say desperation.

"It's Bayezid Pasha," he said softly, with the air of one who meditates while he speaks. "It's Bayezid Pasha. He's come—to claim Roxalana and that mission to Paris."

CHAPTER XIX.

"She shan't go!" I said. The truth came out. "Let him have the requisition on the Banque de France, if he wants it so much. But he shan't have Roxalana."

Monsieur Beau and Miss Stickney both gave me a glance. It was as if I were a child who had broken in on the conversation of his elders.

"Where's the *cadi*?" asked Miss Stickney.

"Safe," said Monsieur Beau.

"Does Bayezid know he is here?"

"I believe not. We are betrayed, but those who would betray us might still be faithful to him."

"Isn't the way out ready?"

I was to find out before long what was meant by "the way out," but I didn't know then.

"Still closed," said Monsieur Beau. "They've been working on it day and night. It will be open within twenty-four hours. All we need is a little time. Hear? They're in the garden. Bayezid will be demanding my presence."

"Let's fight him," I ventured.

"There's no chance," said Monsieur Beau. "We have responsibilities you don't know about. As long as the—as the *cadi*—" He checked himself. There was no time to waste in futile

explanations. He had turned to Miss Stickney again. "I could mystify Bayezid in the matter of the requisition on the Banque de France," he said. "Now, if I could do the same in the matter of Roxalana— Is there, perchance, a girl, a woman—"

"I understand," said Miss Stickney. "I'll do it."

"No, no!" said Monsieur Beau. "It may mean your death."

"I'm not afraid to die," said Miss Stickney. "I'm ready. And, anyway, if it would prevent Bayezid from committing this other sin, why, I'd be so glad!"

"What is this talk of your dying?" thrilled Roxalana softly. She sprang forward, put her arms about Miss Stickney's shoulders. She and the elder woman were of the same size, both of them slight of build. They might have been two sisters standing there, as, indeed, they were, albeit one was of Boston and the other of Stamboul, one a Christian, the other a follower of the Prophet. "I shan't let you go!" said Roxalana.

While they were speaking to each other softly in French, in Turkish, in English, Monsieur Beau turned to me.

"The destinies of all of us and of that plan of ours hang in the balance. If things go wrong now, let it be known to our own consciences, at least, that we have done our best. And remember this: I've loved you, sought your advancement in the world. Will you forgive me for having got you into this—this vortex?"

I seized his hand.

"Is it as bad as that?" I asked.

"The *cadi* has hesitated too long," he said. "He has hesitated all his life. He's forgotten that this is a time when seconds count. We had a chance to slip away before Bayezid got back to Stamboul. And his enemies, and mine, were responsible for bringing him here from beyond the Bosphorus during my ab-

sence. Now Bayezid has struck. With Roxalana and the sultan's gold, he will be one of the masters of the empire, whatever else happens."

"He shan't—he must not——"

I was so strangled that I couldn't get the words out. I was so dismayed that I couldn't think.

"The sultan's last card—that requisition on the Banque de France," said Monsieur Beau. "My son"—he embraced me—"the game isn't ended. Even if the *cadi* lose, still you and I may win for the betterment of the world."

I was too confused to collate all this just then. Much of it passed unnoticed at the time. It was all taking place in seconds, and right under the toppling menace of Bayezid Pasha and his secret police. Strange, but as I stood there, I recalled a begging dervish who had established himself under the wall of the garden—a beggar from Bagdad, with whom I had seen Kavak speak; and I guessed then that the beggar and Kavak had been instrumental in bringing Bayezid so swiftly to the scene.

Miss Stickney had released herself from Roxalana's arms, was whispering to me:

"If I should disappear, you'll promise me that you'll look out for Roxalana?"

"God give me power!" I cried.

"No girl has had a better upbringing," Miss Stickney went on hastily. "She's scarcely been out of my sight. Listen! For reasons of state she has never been told that her father was a son of—Abdul-Hamid."

Things like that—all in a whirl of excitement. And then an Albanian appeared furtively, whispered to Monsieur Beau in a dialect of his own. Monsieur Beau seized my hand.

"Remain silent and out of sight," he adjured. "Miss Stickney—Roxalana, come——"

They started away. I ran after them.

"Let me have some part in this," I begged. "And when shall I see you all again?"

There was a commotion in the house. There was a commotion in the street. It was as if there were a commotion in the whole city. Monsieur Beau shepherded them away from me, gave me but a single look out of those dark eyes of his, murmured, "Quick! Quick!" And I was alone in the deserted garden.

Presently I looked over the wall that divided this part of the garden from the rest of it. In the darkness over there were many men—Bayezid's men, I had no doubt. I was overwhelmed with a sense of helplessness.

The primal instinct of self was at work. I was forgetting about all those young men who were dying for their "great idea." I could think of nothing but my wretched self, and of Roxalana. And all the widening circles of men and women and circumstance about us were, just then, no more than the widening ripples on a pool to those who drown.

At last I also made my way to the house. I entered it. The villa was large and rambling. The geography of it was a complicated thing.

I found a smallish, unfurnished chamber, vaguely lit, vaguely filled with sound. Apart from the door through which I had come, all that relieved the monotony of its four white walls was a curious arrangement in the wall through which the light came. This was a revolving cupboard, such as, I have since learned, exists in many Moslem houses. They call it a *dutap*.

This cupboard was tall and narrow. By means of it, meals and packages could be passed from the men's part of the house, the *selamlık*, into the women's part of the house, the *haremlık*, and no one visible.

I remedied this latter quality. It made me wild to hear things going on

beyond the contraption and not be able to see. I exerted all my strength. It wouldn't turn any more, when I had finished, but I had jammed it far enough out of plumb to give me a crack of an inch or so through which I could see into the room beyond. I was in darkness.

For some minutes, I could hear nothing but excited voices in Turkish, not very loud, but surcharged with vehemence.

It wasn't the *cadi* who spoke. I should have recognized his voice among a million. I found myself in a tremor. In the jumble of Turkish I had caught one word, a name—Roxalana's. Was it possible that Monsieur Beau would play me false? Or Miss Stickney herself? What had Miss Stickney meant when she had said: "If I should disappear"?

I pressed my face into the cupboard. The chamber beyond was large. It was lighted, as was all the rest of the house, by those flickering oil cups.

There came a lull. Then I heard a droning voice in French that gave me a spasm of bitterness. My memory sped back to the restaurant on the water front at Phalerum, to the man who had threatened me there, to the man who threatened ruination to all my hopes of earthly happiness now.

It was Bayezid Pasha who was speaking.

CHAPTER XX.

"These two things," he said. "And, after all, you cannot say that I am over-exacting. Mademoiselle, if I dare recall it to you, is already mine—has already been betrothed to me by her august grandfather." There was a sort of slumbrous assurance about the way he spoke that added venom to the words. "As for the requisition on the Banque de France, that is in behalf of Turkey. The money, monsieur, was derived from the imperial revenues. I

shall merely be the agent for its restoration in this hour of Turkey's need."

"That is true," came another voice. It was the voice of Monsieur Beau.

"So you'll not only be saving the lives of some estimable people, but serving patriotic ends, as well," said Bayezid.

"If I have understood it correctly," Monsieur Beau went on, "all that you demand, then, is that mademoiselle accompany you forthwith, and that the requisition be turned over to you?"

"That is all."

All! It was only a primitive sense of caution that kept me silent. I could have shrieked.

"I believe," said Monsieur Beau, "that it can be arranged. It is understood, of course, that all the other occupants of this villa shall have safe conduct to any place they may desire to go?"

"All except our young American."

"No, he especially," said Monsieur Beau. "I am responsible. It was I who brought him here."

"But I can't count on his discretion," said Bayezid Pasha, with an air of finality. "You others I know will not make a noise, will not talk too much. But these Americans—I know the breed. This one will do like all the others—blab everything to the newspapers, get himself photographed, pose as a hero, make trouble for us both here and in France. No, you will have to leave him to me."

"To do what?"

A significant silence.

"Impossible!" said Monsieur Beau.

"Oh, very well, then," droned Bayezid wearily. "After all, he is of no consequence. Only, you will have to extract his promise. But I don't have to tell you that I don't like the toad. I'll have him followed. And if——"

"Ah, here are the papers," said Monsieur Beau.

There was a movement, and, through my cupboard, I could see both

Monsieur Beau and Bayezid Pasha standing very close together, face to face. Monsieur Beau had a long envelope, which he proceeded to open with his clever hands. Bayezid Pasha leaned over, watching the process with glittering eyes.

He was dressed in a black frock coat and striped trousers. I believe he even wore spats. At any rate, he wore the other accouterments of Europe. His linen was white. I could see the flash of a gem in his scarf. But on his head was a fez. Handsome he was. And it made me sick to think that he was thus garnished because he had come to seek his bride.

I saw Bayezid take the paper that Monsieur Beau extracted from the envelope, open it, and scan it with an intensity of emotion that amounted to fervor. He talked aloud, to himself, confirming detail after detail.

"The seal is correct. Five million pounds Turkish—in gold—to bearer—current rate of exchange— Ha! One hundred and twenty-eight million francs! Or more! Or more! Payable in Paris." He slowly folded the paper, then opened it again. His cheek bones were higher as he smiled. "The seal—the signature—"

Monsieur Beau was looking stealthily, one would have said, first at the paper and then at Bayezid Pasha. I myself was as hypnotized. There was the paper for which I had fought, unwittingly, on the hill of the Acropolis, for which I had plunged into the bay at Phalerum, for which I had traveled under the ocean, risked mines and warships, and come to Turkey. Twenty-five million dollars!

"If it is all the same to you, monsieur," said Bayezid, "I shall not again permit this document to leave my hands."

"As you will," said Monsieur Beau softly.

The Frenchman held up the empty

envelope. He had bulged it open, so that the pasha could slip the paper back into it without difficulty. The Turk did so. I saw him do it. I was watching with all my eyes.

"And mademoiselle?" breathed the pasha, with the snarling grin of a panther.

I could have sobbed. I pawed at the *dutap*. I got a grip on it. I planted my feet against the wall. I tugged until I heard my back begin to creak. But I made no outcry. I didn't have much sense, just then, but I had enough sense for that.

Roxalana had come into the room where Monsieur Beau and Bayezid were. I knew it even before they spoke again, before I saw her. I knew it by the silence. She was in her *charchaf*, that hooded cloak that made her look like a nun.

"Unveil!" said Bayezid.

She hesitated. Monsieur Beau murmured something. She threw back her hood. She was there, with her head up, a look of scorn on her face.

"You will not blame me," said the pasha softly, "if I suspected a trick."

He was speaking to Monsieur Beau. All my eyes were for Roxalana as she drew her hood into place again. My mouth was dry. My heart was pounding, and every pound was an ache.

"I warn you again," Bayezid Pasha was saying, "that I shall keep the villa under guard for a week. If, at the end of that time, there has been no hitch, you will be free to move."

Monsieur Beau spoke little. He still had that look of stealth about him—stealth and strength. I think it was that alone that gave me whatever was left me of self-control. I couldn't break through the revolving cupboard. It would do no good to howl. It might be worse than useless to try to fight my way back to the other side of the house through the crowded garden.

Then came a disturbance, sharp and

swift, off to one side of the room in which this private drama of mine was being enacted. There were shouts and a clash, a revolver shot. At the sound of it, Roxalana must have started to run away. There was an interval when I could see nothing; then she was there again, with the pasha's hand on her wrist.

He was talking over his shoulder, evidently to Monsieur Beau.

"Had I thought you were up to your tricks——"

"*Mais non*," growled Monsieur Beau. "But I can't be responsible for all these persons. You've got what you want. Go! Go, without further delay, or there may be a misfortune."

Roxalana, swathed in her *charchaf*, was led away.

Then I knew that the time for action had come. I was perfectly cool about it. I reasoned. I would have to let them get away from the house where there were so many of Bayezid's followers, lest Roxalana herself be hurt. But I would have to follow them.

I fought my way to the wall bordering the cemetery—did it with the stealth and treachery—and the ferocity, too—of a wolf. I make no bones about saying so. And over the wall I went. I knew well enough that the street just outside was likely to be filled with enemies. I took no chances. In the cemetery—I could lurk, take my observations. Nothing in the world mattered but to protect Roxalana. The wall was high. I jumped. My feet came down on a back that might have belonged to a horse.

It was Reshad.

He had just arrived in Constantinople. He told me about it when he discovered who I was, and had left off strangling me. He had come straight to the villa to report to Monsieur Beau. He had discovered that something was wrong.

Wrong! I told him what I knew.

Reshad embraced me.

"Listen!" he warned.

Through the zone of silence that dropped upon us came the rattle of carriage wheels and the clink of hoofs—far away, farther still.

We started off in pursuit at a run.

CHAPTER XXI.

There was a house that must have lain a good three miles away, as the crow flies. It lay in the midst of a vast garden, and this garden was surrounded by a high stone wall—a good ten feet high—like some of the old houses of Paris and other continental cities. Trees hung over the wall, and vines festooned the top of it, and trees and vines and wall appeared to have been there since the days of Constantine himself.

That was where Bayezid lived.

Heaven only knows how many miles Reshad and I traveled before we got there. In the hurly-burly movement and shift of the lower city, we had lost the carriage. Reshad was uneasy, not only on my account, but on his own, perhaps. I was a foreigner, without a passport. He, I believe, was a deserter, a partisan of the new revolution that was plotting in the capital.

The streets were unlighted, but the coffee shops were open and crowded. There were many people in the streets—drifting crowds of civilians and soldiers, squads of officers, some of whom wore the fez, some the helmets or the kepis of the kaiser.

I had seen the swelling contours of a mighty building flanked with pointed minarets. It was that mosque from which I had heard the daily calls of the muezzins. Even then, with my hope of happiness on earth in the balance, I felt a lurch of emotion. Was that it?

"*Aya Sophia*," Reshad grunted.

"*Sancta Sophia*!"

I put out a petition to it, then and there. It was as if I had heard English spoken, heard an old, familiar hymn. It was as if I had been steering that lost catboat of mine in a fog and a friendly headland had loomed up to tell me that I wasn't so far from home. A mosque, and yet the holiest of churches!

I was to see Sancta Sophia again, the interior of it, and crowded with the followers of the Prophet, at that. But it was never to be anything for me but a fortress of the faith in which I had been reared—the mightiest bulwark of Christendom, for all that there were Turkish flags fluttering about me, and a swarming crowd who would have slit my throat had I spoken my thoughts.

We were out of the crowds. We passed through miles of dark and apparently deserted streets, where the silence was deep, where new houses and old shouldered each other and leaned over to see us pass. Endless walls, squares, cemeteries, more houses with latticed windows, tumble-down sheds, a dusty desert where I looked back at a blue-black emptiness that I knew must be the sea; then the wall surrounding the place where Bayezid lived.

It appears that it had been one of the ministerial residences under the régime of Abdul-Hamid. There must have been a couple of acres in the grounds, and the wall surrounded it entirely. There were two gates in the wall. One was the main entrance, with high doors of iron-studded wood, tight shut under a stone archway and flanked with the iron-barred windows of a guardroom and a porter's lodge. It might have been the gate of a prison or an arsenal. The other gate, while less imposing, was no less formidable—the entrance to the *haremluk*, Reshad said.

The word made me sick. It brought a taste of blood to my throat.

We had seen no light anywhere. There were no lights in the surrounding streets or in the circumjacent houses. They were as if under a spell.

We found a place where we would be safe from observation, for those latticed windows gave you the impression of being filled with eyes—cynical, inhuman, but alert and ready to betray; and Reshad stirruped my foot with his broad hands and lifted me until I could swing myself to the top of the wall. I lay there in the leaves of a vine and peered across the wooded garden to the house.

It was built in the style of a French château—only two stories high. My heart sank when I saw how dark it was. There came no sound from it. This would, I thought, be the crowning disaster—to have made that sortie into the enemy city, to have climbed and run and crept all these miles on bruised feet through the haunted streets, to have had all these hopes and risks, for the sake of what? For the sake of making the pasha's success complete, for the sake of prolonging Roxalana's period of suffering?

For never before in my life, nor since, have minutes been so absolutely priceless. Reshad had said that this was where Bayezid lived. But weren't there other places in the city where he might have taken his prisoner? Many of them. Perhaps he had been in one of them for half an hour already—an hour.

"Psst!" It was Reshad. "Hear!"

I heard. It was the clatter of the carriage we had heard while we were still in the cemetery. As if the sound were a signal, all the lower windows of the house flashed with light. So did some of those in the upper story—where curtains were being drawn, I imagined, so that the arriving lord might know that his slaves were waiting for him.

The carriage had gone on past the

main entrance. It was following the street around toward the gate reserved to the *haremlik*. No better confirmation could have been given me that my worst fears were groundless.

I dropped to the ground at Reshad's side.

"I'm going in there," I told him.

He muttered something, seized my arm. Then he reflected, with his hollow eyes upon me. He changed his mind. He told me to go ahead, and that he would follow.

"You wait here," I said. I looked up. I could see the constellation of Orion. "If you don't hear from me by the time those stars have swung down to there"—I was giving myself a good hour—"go back to my grandfather's villa and tell him what has happened."

Reshad patted me on the back. I have often thought about it. What if I had killed him that time with the finger of Hercules?

I didn't know how impossible was the thing that I wanted to do. It is just as well that I didn't. It is just as well that Columbus didn't know how impossible it was to sail due west from Spain to Asia.

I stood there on the moldy ground of Bayezid's garden. The high trees soared around me. Up there, at an angle of fifty degrees, was Orion keeping time. I surveyed the illuminated house. I heard the sounds of a gate being opened, the softer crunch of wheels on a gravel roadway.

I wanted to do two things: First of all, I wanted to get word to Roxalana that she wasn't deserted. I wanted her to know how devoted I was, how much more worthy of her I was than the man who had carried her off. But chiefly I wanted to take her for myself—capture her, fight for her, slash the life out of an army corps to prove my right to her, establish a throne, a dynasty, a race, for her and for me. An Ameri-

can, a Bostonian, a graduate of Harvard, and I felt like that! I did. It only goes to show that we're all brothers under the skin. Other men had done this thing that I dreamed of—not in America, not recently anywhere; but it had been done. And wasn't I as good as any man?

I flat-footed forward at a run, cautious yet bold. I remember that much. I also have a hazy recollection of pain and desperation, as something like a club descended upon my bare head.

I had been knocked senseless. I hadn't so much as seen my enemy, let alone fight him. I smuggled these thoughts vaguely into my reeling brain as I slowly recovered myself. I could see that I had been carried into a kitchen, a place presided over by an unmistakable head cook. It was he who kicked me as I inadvertently let out my first groan.

I was lying down at the time. I discovered that my hands were tied.

There was a crowd about—blacks and tawnies and pure white—and they laughed at me. I didn't groan any more. I was sick enough, but I was wondering what next. I knew that the adventure had but just begun.

Then a messenger returned and told the cook something that I couldn't understand. It filled him with joy and the others there with pleasurable anticipation. They jerked me to my feet. The cook started off with me, driving me by the rope that bound my hands, butting me with his knee. There was a roar of laughter.

We went through a pantry into a corridor, and through the corridor into a large room furnished like a drawing-room and ablaze with light. I blinked about me. And there was Bayezid Pasha standing directly under a crystal chandelier.

I must have looked sick. I was feeling that way, goodness knows!

But—will you believe it?—if I looked any sicker than he did, just then, I must have looked like a corpse. That was what he took me for. Just that!

"You?" he gasped. "They told me that you were dead!"

I managed a smile. It was just as well I did. It was the last smile I was to have for some time to come.

He strode forward with a sort of angular movement, his shoulders drawn back and motionless and his face thrust out. His color, usually so rich, was of a cadaverous tinge. He came close. Before I could gather what his intentions were, he had struck me across the mouth. And there was a heavy ring on that particular hand.

"You're a pup!" I said.

"I thought you were dead," he sneered, or snarled—that cruel, high whine of the real animal in man. And he struck me again.

I strained to release my hands. No use! The cook, with his hand on the rope, gave it a jerk that almost dislocated my shoulders.

"I'm going to kill you for that!" I said.

Dreadful words, but I am glad I spoke them.

"Don't be impatient," he whined. "I'll give you additional motive."

And he struck me a third time.

It is my private belief that he intended to finish me off then and there, but the hand of the Lord must have been in the whole matter. As, indeed, how can it ever be otherwise?

A stoutish man, gray, clad in a frock coat and a fez and all the other accoutrements of the Europeanized Turk, came bursting into the room. In one of his hands he was waving half a dozen sheets of paper. In his other hand there was an envelope. I had a spasm of hope. Somehow or other it seemed to me that I had seen that envelope not so very long before.

"Excellency," cried the newcomer in

perfect French, "there has been some mistake."

"What do you mean by a mistake?" grated Bayezid Pasha. "Aren't the bankers satisfied?"

"But the requisition! But the requisition!"

The pasha went sickly white.

"Well, what about it? Isn't it in good form?"

"It is missing," the other answered. He was shaking all over—hands, voice, his big, fat body. "There is no requisition here."

CHAPTER XXII.

For a moment or two I thought that Bayezid Pasha was going to have an attack of apoplexy. His neck swelled. His face went from pale to almost black. Every muscle in his body seemed to tighten. He made a couple of steps forward. Very slowly he reached out and took the papers the other man held. He scanned them. Then he scanned the face of the man in front of him.

"Have I been robbed in my own house?" he demanded.

Over the face of the secretary came an expression of lugubrious appeal and consternation. He shrugged his fat shoulders. He lifted his fat hands. He bowed himself, as if he expected a blow. But the pasha was thinking. After all, he had splendid control over himself.

"I forgot," he said, "that I was dealing with a mountebank."

He gurgled a dozen phrases in Turkish—oaths, no doubt, and terrible enough for any man. They made the secretary tremble afresh. I felt a twitching of the rope that bound my hands and that the cook still held. Then Bayezid was speaking French again:

"I'm going to have him killed like a dog, the dirty faker, the snake-charming *giaour*!" He was turning his wrath in my direction. He was speaking for my benefit. "And before I kill him, I will

give him a chance to find out what I have done to his spawn."

He strode over to me. He struck me in the face with his fist.

There was only one word that I could think of, and I used it: "*Schwein-hund!*"

He merely snarled an order to the fellow back of me, and I was almost jerked from my feet as he started to drag me away. I was all but crazy with pain and rage, but, at the same time, I was inspired with a hope that I scarcely dared put into words—not even in the secret places of my brain.

That allusion of Bayezid's had recalled to my mind certain other things in connection with Monsieur Beau—those disappearing beads, the deftness of his hands, an occasional remark that he had made about his experiences in the desert. Now, wasn't it possible that by some miracle in this world of miracles Monsieur Beau himself was my grandfather, the real Monsieur de Guise? He might have fought like the Archangel Michael when he was a youth, might have leaped over his horse from the ground, lifted an ox with his right hand.

But if Monsieur Beau were my grandfather, who, then, was the *cadi*?

All this was revolving in my brain as the brutal cook jerked me over backward, while the pain and the disgrace of Bayezid's blows were still burning on my mouth, and while, at the same time, I heard Bayezid giving his orders, swift and tense and not very loud, to have the villa I had so recently left seized and sealed and every living soul in it taken to some palace or other and put in solitary confinement until he could investigate—"until I have time to adjust certain personal matters," was the way he put it.

What these personal matters were I was soon to find out.

The cook dragged me into some sort of an inner chamber—a sort of com-

munication room between the public and the private part of the establishment, as I later figured it out; that is, between the *haremluk* and the *selamluk*, such as might be found in any Moslem residence of the more elaborate sort. It was a sinister place, without any windows, with a suggestion about it of being soundproof, secretive, used to tragedy.

The cook must have had a taste for tragedy himself, or maybe he thought that he would render himself more lovable to his chief, for no sooner were we in this room and the door closed behind us than he slapped me on his own account.

What followed came pretty fast. I kept no record of it at the time—not even in the subconscious photography of the brain. I remember this, however, even now—remember it distinctly as I write—how soft his round paunch felt to my foot as I kicked him there. The pity of it is that I was unshod. I stumbled forward. I whirled. I caught him just right. At any rate, my heel was hard enough, and it caught him where he lived.

He flopped over backward with his shoulders against the wall. He had no wind left in him to shout. I may have kicked him two or three times again before he recovered himself. I don't regret it. I have no qualms of conscience at all.

I know that there was no regret in me even when he recovered himself and began to beat me into oblivion—no regret other than that my hands were tied, and that I could only fight him with my teeth.

Then the door opened, and Bayezid Pasha came in.

There was a quick exchange in Turkish. Bayezid was by way of finding fault at first. I suppose he was afraid that the cook had broken his toy. He stirred me with his foot to see what condition I was in. He was satisfied,

but his humor continued savage. He spat out an order, and the fat underling began to tear the clothes from me.

"Do you know what I'm going to do now?" Bayezid asked me. "I'm going to give you the worst lashing you ever got in your life, and I'm going to do it in the presence of a spectator, in the presence of an audience. Audience is right. You'll howl, all right!"

I didn't answer right away. What he said and the way he said it made it impossible for me to speak just then. I've always had a horror of being whipped. A teacher tried it on me once when I was a little boy in school. Incidentally, I may mention that he succeeded. But we never saw each other again after that. I honestly believe that he was as little desirous of it as I was.

Bayezid kept on saying things like that all the time the cook was jerking my clothes from me. The process was not simple. My hands remained tied behind my back. My garments seemed preternaturally tough. To tear them off, the cook had to put his foot on me and tug with all his strength. Bayezid enjoyed the process. It gave him time to think of a new indignity. After I was stripped, and every socket of my body all but disarticulated, he gave the cook a further order that the fellow had some trouble to understand. He got it through his head at last, and hurried away, laughing. When he came back, he had two objects. One was a rattan cane. The other was an American flag.

Gush, jingoism—this talk about the flag? As the Lord liveth, whenever I see that flag now whipping and furling against the blue sky, I feel a cheer in my chest. I feel such a surge of fighting devotion that it is all I can do to keep my feet on the ground. The soul of me begins to sing. Mentally I uncover. A chorus from inside of me—as if I were a sort of psychic phonograph—begins to chant: "Oh, say, do you see——"

There, in that little room of tragedy in a Turkish palace, the sight of it brought back my breath and my courage, my pride and my hope. It made me a man again. It made me an American.

There is no use repeating my exact words. They would sound stogy, highfaluting. But I told Bayezid Pasha that if he did anything to dishonor that flag, he'd regret it. I told him that I intended to kill him, anyway, for what he had already done. I said that even if he killed me first, though, and dishonored the flag afterward, I would come back as a ghost and freeze the breath in his lungs.

He spat on the flag and he spat on me.

Then they twisted the flag around me as a sort of breechclout. I didn't have anything more to say. I was pretty sure by this time who that spectator was going to be: Roxalana!

I was right. That was what Bayezid intended. He didn't have to ask what had brought me to this place. He knew. He probably imagined even more than he knew. He was that sort. I hadn't got much the start of him, but, none the less, I had been living there in the same house with that intended bride of his. Now he wanted to show her how low this American and the American's flag could be brought.

I was praying God for courage. No sound should leave my lips. I would be equal to the first Americans in that respect—just like the Comanche captives at the stake.

Bayezid struck me twice with the rattan to see how it went. It all but cut the breath out of me, left me nothing but white flames instead.

Was he satisfied?

He must have been. He jumped to the door at the other end of the room. He twisted it open. He called an order, and he was so excited that his voice sounded throatier than ever.

I scarcely dared look, but I did. I saw a muffled figure in a *charchaf* between two hulking black eunuchs.

About two seconds after that my pain and my misery were forgotten. The lady had jerked her *charchaf* aside, stood there unveiled. And it wasn't Roxalana at all. It was Miss Stickney!

CHAPTER XXIII.

I was to get the facts from her later. She had been a willing accessory to the surprising legerdemain of Monsieur Beau. That was what she had meant when she had spoken to me about her possible disappearance. She had expected to die—or worse—for Roxalana's sake.

She was the first to speak.

"I am not ashamed of my face," she said to Bayezid Pasha.

She cast an unabashed look about her. She saw me, but she did not recognize me. She took two or three prim steps to a divan. She sat down, with her chin up.

Bayezid Pasha staggered slightly. He was like a man who has been struck on the head. His feet were apart. His body was crooked. His two arms were out, as if he were clinging for support to an invisible railing. But he gradually got himself under control again. He even assumed a certain appearance of dignity. He himself sat down.

"Oo-oo-m!" droned Bayezid Pasha.

"You have no one to blame for this but yourself," said Miss Stickney reproachfully, with bitter sorrow, not very loud.

"I have always hated you missionaries," said the pasha.

"What you proposed to do was not civilized," said the lady from Boston.

"Particularly you American missionaries," said the Turk.

"You already had a charming wife," Miss Stickney went on.

"But I will clean them out," said

Bayezid Pasha. "I'll see what some of my Kurdish brethren will say—about those who come here—in the guise of religion—and insult our sacred writings. Shut up! Not another word, or I'll have you whipped!"

I could scarcely breathe. I could not, actually, believe my ears. Bayezid Pasha couldn't have threatened Miss Stickney like that! He might whip me, but a lady! I had to ask.

"Do you mean," I inquired, "that you would have a lady whipped? An American lady?"

Bayezid was several seconds in getting his head turned around. It seemed to hurt him. I could see his neck swell and his ears get redder than they were already. His two eyes were snakelike, flamelike. They played about me. His mouth was wide, straight, and cold. A look, and then he turned again to Miss Stickney. His tone was cutting:

"A friend of yours!"

Miss Stickney uttered a little cry. Before I knew what her intentions were, she was kneeling at my side. I felt the touch of her hand on my back. Not the balm of Gilead could have been more soothing.

"I'll show you, before I'm through!" said Bayezid Pasha. "You were in Stamboul at the time of the last revolution. You know what happened when they began to use the broom on the reactionaries. You remember—don't you?—the tripods at every corner and every tripod with its human fruit? Well, that's the way it's going to be again this time, only there will be friends of yours among them—this young dog, for one, and all of those fine friends of Abdul's who've been running so much of late to that villa of yours. Revolution, is it? A revolution of free Americans and an old Frenchman on behalf of the butcher Abdul-Hamid—"

"You were eager enough to be his friend," said Miss Stickney.

"Leave that dog alone!" said Bayezid.

The eunuchs drew near, but Miss Stickney hissed something at them in Turkish that made them hesitate.

"There's nothing to keep me from killing you now—both of you," Bayezid went on, as if the words somehow soothed him, "except that I want the girl to enjoy the spectacle. Oh, she won't lose anything by having waited, by having had her share in this clever trick of yours! She won't get away. I'll have her here to witness whatever I may decide to have done to you."

"We're American citizens," said Miss Stickney.

"Bah!" cried Bayezid, with an accent of contempt. "I'm sick of you Americans. The whole world is sick of you Americans."

"You and your sort are," said Miss Stickney. She checked herself. "This boy didn't do anything to merit this," she said. "He has been dragged into all this against his will—"

I tried to protest, but she put her handkerchief over my mouth with a slight pressure.

"You'll want friends," she went on fiercely, "and you'll want them soon. Turkey is on the brink. You know it. You haven't forgotten Lule Burgas. Worse than Lule Burgas is to come. Then, where will you be? Where will they be who call themselves your friends?"

"You've been listening to Abdul-Hamid," suggested the pasha suavely.

"I've been listening to the people call on Allah."

"Abdul is there—in that villa?" He was after information.

"I don't know."

"Tell me, and I'll let you both go."

"Who comes and goes in the *selamlık* I do not know."

"You lie!"

"Don't you say that!" I shouted, freeing my mouth.

Bayezid gave me a kick, without looking at me.

"You lie!" he repeated.

"For the last time," said Miss Stickney, "I beg of you, for your own sake, as well as ours, to send us away from here. I have given my life to Turkey. Think of all that America has done for her—the colleges, the hospitals."

"Bah!" sneered Bayezid. "If it hadn't been for you Americans, Turkey would have driven her enemies into the sea long ago. They kill us with your shells, your submarines, your cannon. Bah! And you American women talk too much! Turkey on the brink, is she? I'll show you! And I'll show you what I think of America!"

He got to his feet. He stood there for a moment with murderous indecision. Before he could make up his mind, there came an interruption, a knocking at the door through which I had been brought.

It was that little man, Hilmi, who had called at the villa to warn us of Bayezid's return to Constantinople—the undersized man with the grave and pleasant face. I take my hat off to him. Every time, nowadays, that I see a man whom nature has handicapped like that, I look right through him for the size of his soul. Hilmi's eyes, gay and sympathetic and unafraid, looked up into the murderous eyes of Bayezid Pasha.

"There's a mob headed in this direction," he said. "I think the Frenchman's back of it, the object being to rescue the man and the woman."

"Is the French dog still at large?" roared Bayezid.

Hilmi never flinched.

"He had a few minutes the start, but he's doomed."

Bayezid squirmed, with the convulsive strength of a big snake tightening its coils.

"They'll see!" he whispered.

He gave an order in Turkish to

Hilmi. Then, without giving us another look, he ran from the room.

Under one part of Bayezid's palace there was a stone cellar, and under this a sort of subcellar. The subcellar had an iron door, and there was a narrow flight of stone steps leading down into it. That was all that I saw of it.

To the iron door, Hilmi, the two eunuchs, and the cook brought Miss Stickney and me. It might have been death or torture right ahead of us. It most likely was, so far as the plans of Bayezid were concerned. I was disfigured, all but naked. It was the sight of Miss Stickney that gave me courage. It was the presence of Hilmi that somehow made me hope. He was human. He was one of us. No circumstances could damn him.

In obedience to the instructions of Hilmi, the two eunuchs cautiously started down the last flight of stone steps. Each carried a candle. Each candle flickered ghostly alarm. The cook stood at the head of the stairs, waiting for whatever it was that the eunuchs might say.

There was a gulping roar, darkness, the door slammed shut. And all that I had seen was the cook reaching for shadows as he fell. Hilmi had pushed him over from behind.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was Reshad and Hilmi who had planned the thing. Hilmi gave Reshad all the credit for it—there in the darkness of the cellar, with the prisoners in the subcellar pounding on the door and shouting their muffled appeals and threats, and death in an army corps of invisible shapes ready to burst in upon us at any second.

Already the word had gone out into Constantinople to round up the principals of the new revolution. Before dawn many of those fine men, young and old, whom I had seen at the villa

would be crowding the cells of the various police stations throughout the city. Bayezid Pasha might still make himself master of the sultan's private fortune, but he had gone too far now, even had he ever desired or intended it, to draw back from the plan that he had precipitated.

Bayezid Pasha had a list of the ring-leaders. He himself had entered deeply enough into the conspiracy to become familiar with most of the names.

So much I gathered while there in the darkness Hilmi was releasing my hands, chafing back the circulation into them.

At the head of the cellar stairs, he turned us over to a black man who was faithful to him, and the black man, with the cunning of the jungle still in his blood, got us safely through the park and over the wall to where Reshad was waiting.

Hilmi? He remained behind. We urged him to come, but he was set on gaining for us and the other refugees in Stamboul a little time. He was going to try to kill Bayezid. That was his plan. It was to be Bayezid or he.

God rest his soul!

The three of us fled into the dusty commons, where Reshad and I had been before. There was the open sky. There was the smell of the sea. It was so like that other Common where I had dreamed such dreams that—I couldn't help it—I broke down and wept.

It was during an interval when Reshad had gone away to find some clothing for me. And Miss Stickney mothered me, with such few words and yet with such perfect sympathy that I could have begun the fight all over again, on her account alone.

From the direction of Bayezid's house came the sound of a revolver shot.

"Hilmi!" I whispered.

"Or Bayezid," said Miss Stickney.

One of them, we knew, was dead.

Reshad came back. He had a complete outfit of clothing. To me it looked just like the clothing that had been worn by one of Bayezid's guards, but no questions were asked, no explanation given.

It was through a city of dread expectancy that we made our way back toward our fateful villa. Something was astir, there was no telling what. The streets were unlighted; so were the houses; but from the mosques we passed came a murmur and a glow, both of which were ghostly, suggestive of death. For Constantinople had become the Mecca of wounded and refugees. How many there were will, perhaps, never be known.

"Allah! Allah! Inshallah!"

The first and last articulate cry of the Moslem world—of suffering humanity in general!

There was evidence, also, of abundant strength and passion still devoted to the devil's work. There were a good many armed squads about. A drifting mob, not very noisy, but as potent for destruction as that drifting mine beyond the Dardanelles, was being driven none too gently into the all-engulfing night by a regiment of soldiers. What had already happened? What was going to happen? Why had the mob formed, and whither was it going?

Mystery all, to be referred to—if at all—in a line or two in some future history: "In Constantinople itself there were many disturbances."

Through back streets and queer passages that Reshad knew, we descended into the lower part of the city until we were once again under the very shadow of Sancta Sophia. Over a wall we went, and found ourselves in the friendly cemetery. At the garden gate we were challenged by a stranger, but Reshad throttled him before he could make an outcry.

In the garden, we stopped and lis-

tened. There had always been that atmosphere of mystery about it—for me, at least. But to-night it was more mysterious than ever. The very rosebushes seemed to whisper to us to be careful, to go slow. Instinctively I looked at that upper casement where the light had been on the night of my arrival. Darkness there! Darkness and silence immersed the place like a subtle, poisonous gas.

Finally, after a consultation in words that were scarcely breathed, Reshad and Miss Stickney were left in the garden while I made my way under the house. I had told them about the trapdoor that I had discovered in the floor of my room, and we had decided that this was the best way to find out what the villa contained. There appeared to be no one but ourselves in the garden, but the garden itself was guarded, as we had seen, and the doors of the villa were locked and closed with seals. There was no telling when Bayezid, or the agents of Bayezid, might come back for a perquisition in the name of the government. Should we be discovered there, our lives wouldn't be worth an extra breath.

But where were we to go? And, anyway, we couldn't have left that place of mystery without some effort to learn the fate that had already overtaken our friends.

I gave the lime pit under the floor as wide a berth as possible. I pushed the trapdoor open. I came up into the room that I had come to consider almost as a home. The faint odor of tobacco smoke and of coffee greeted me now like a familiar spirit, gave me a pang of nostalgia for what I had lost—Roxalana, Monsieur Beau, the bubble of the great adventure that had expanded only to burst.

There had been matches on a walnut stand near the divan. I groped along the place where I had slept, but drew back, with a sharp sensation of horror,

as my hand came into contact with what I took to be the body of a man. I called my courage back. I tried again. I followed the still shape that I couldn't see, contour by contour. Then I jerked back again. My fingers had touched the handle of a knife.

That was what it was. Into that shape on the divan a knife had been buried to the hilt. No wonder the thing didn't move!

I went through all the old arguments about a dead man being harmless. But what if this was the body of one of my missing friends?

At that, I groped boldly for the matches. I found them. I struck a light, nor minded the consequences.

There on the divan at the side of me was that roll of bedding I had fixed up in imitation of myself. It was pinned through by a dagger a good foot in length. No wonder Bayezid had been surprised to see me appear alive!

There was only one place where I lingered long. That was the chamber on the upper floor where the light had been on the night of my arrival at the villa. It was Roxalana's room.

I stood there, trembling, I don't know how many minutes, gulping back emotions that were like to stifle me. Not until then was I absolutely sure that I had made acquaintance with that mystical, magical, deadly, life-giving thing called love. Like the breath and essence of love was the delicate fragrance that lingered there.

I struck a match, and near where I was standing I saw a crumpled bit of paper. I picked it up. It bore the stain of rough fingers, but it needed only a glance to see that it was some sort of a note.

There was writing on it in a girlish hand, well balanced, not without character. I felt a little stab of joy. The very first words I saw were these: "Dear John."

The whole note read:

DEAR JOHN: Out by the lime pit you spoke to me about. We are going. In haste.
ROXALANA.

We were none too soon. In the street adjoining the garden there was a scurry as of many men; Bayezid Pasha, perhaps, having finished his work in other quarters, having discovered that his late prisoners were gone. But I had told Miss Stickney of the lime pit under the house, and she had told us in a word or two about the "way out" that had been under preparation ever since the villa had become a revolutionary center. She hadn't known where it was. This must be it, and she was right.

While the front gate of the garden was being opened, by whom we were never to know, we passed on under the house. A tunnel had been opened there; a mere burrow through the lime it was, yet large enough. And scarcely had I crouched into this hole when my hand touched a bit of cloth as soft and light as down.

I smelled of it—no Australian bushman could have done so more naturally—and it brought me news. It was a handkerchief, and the perfume of it was like the atmosphere of the room where I had found the note.

Roxalana's!

I pressed the little relic to my heart. I motioned for Reshad and Miss Stickney to wait while I investigated farther. I crawled down into the hole on my hands and knees.

CHAPTER XXV.

Who'll ever tell us what becomes of all the lost work in the world? I've watched the tide shifting tons of sand and shell along the shore, rolling it up, rolling it back again. That is about the way it is with most of the work of mankind. So I have come to believe. There is, for instance, that long and

laborious hole in the earth that was dug for our still-born revolution. And yet perhaps that same hole in the earth will be useful, some day, to other people hard pressed. You never can tell. For beyond the first part of the tunnel, there was a vaster hole of the same sort, dug centuries ago. And perhaps the tide, rolling its tons of sand about, is really preparing some human event scheduled for a thousand years hence.

The burrow through which I passed had been hastily made through the yielding earth for a distance of twenty feet or so, descending at an angle of forty-five degrees. At the bottom of this slope the passage continued horizontally, but, by the flicker of the matches I lit, I could see that this continuation of the hole was more than a mere burrow. It was still narrow, and not more than five feet high, but it had been liberally daubed with whitewash, was shored up with planks.

It was the work of one of the best engineers in the Turkish army, as I found out afterward—a man educated in the famous *Ecole Polytechnique*, of France. It was as pretty a sap as ever mined a fort.

I called to Reshad and Miss Stickney. They joined me. Reshad covered our tracks as best he could.

The sap ran off straight ahead into the baffling unknown. It, also, had just been completed. That was obvious. The whitewash was still wet. There was a smell in it like that of a prison or tomb. And the length of it was seven hundred steps. I counted them. It was then that we debouched into a greater excavation.

This, too, was a subterranean passage, but of another sort. There are many man-made caverns in the blood-stained earth of old Stamboul, some of them dating from Byzantium—caves dug by the slaves of men too fat of soul to stand up and fight; places to

flee to; places to hide gold in. And this was one of them.

It was walled and floored with stone. It had a pointed arch above. It fairly dripped with iniquity and age. Ten feet broad and ten feet high it must have been, and it had an air of running from vastness to vastness, as a link, somehow, from the past without a beginning and the future without an end. It was such an overpowering gulf, as seen by the flicker of a match, that we all stopped and held our breath.

And which direction now?

I heard Reshad whisper an "*Inshallah!*" as I let the match go out. In my own heart, I may have whispered the equivalent in English. I was yearning for Monsieur Beau and for Roxalana with an earnestness that must have been a power in itself. A wonderful thing is desire—the stuff that prayers and miracles and all sorts of greatness are made of. Some day a magician will harness this power, and that will be the beginning of the millennium.

Miss Stickney collapsed. Dear soul—with the frame of a delicate lady, the heart of an Abraham Lincoln!

"Just five minutes," she said, "and perhaps I can get these old legs of mine to go again. It's silly of them. They never acted like this before."

When I thought of all that she had been through—how she had braved Bayezid Pasha, how she had protected me and soothed me there, with her own death imminent, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and affection.

She stretched out on the deep, soft dust of the cavern. We made shift to arrange some sort of a pillow for her head. Reshad and I sat down on either side of her. We were going to keep watch, so we assured each other. It's my own private belief that the three of us slept for hours—so dark, so still, with light and movement only in troubled dreams.

Like that, far, far off to the right

of us, I was sure that I saw Roxalana and the *cadi* and some one else—saw them dimly by the light of a candle. The impression was clear enough to give me something of a shock when I opened my eyes and found the darkness unbroken, knew that I had been dreaming.

But here is where the strange part of it comes in—when the others awoke, they followed me; I knew which way to go.

We got under way again. With our diminishing supply of matches, we plodded on and on. And, every now and then, it would pop into my thoughts how, over our heads, straight up, Constantinople swarmed and sweated, suffered and bled, plotted and dreamed.

Reshad checked both of us. He had heard something, seen something.

So did we, presently, after we had done our best to repress our breathing, see light where nothing but darkness was. But a light was there—not where I had been looking for it; a mere dim glimmer, as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp.

I went forward alone. I wasn't afraid—not afraid of any enemy I might meet. The only thing I feared was to tell my friends about that dream of mine and then have it turn out to be wrong. I left them pressed against the wall, where I'd be sure to find them again in case of need. I drew a clasp knife that I had found in the purloined clothes I wore. I kept my own hand on the wall. And what I saw, when I had advanced far enough, was just what I had seen before.

Eerie? Impossible?

There are all sorts of queer properties of the human brain that have never been charted or explained—all in the realm of quackdom, the doctors will tell you, the vagaries of spiritualists and hypnotists. And yet I don't know why such things should be held in bad repute when they've had credentials from

such men as Sir Oliver Lodge and the late William T. Stead and our own Professor James.

There was a flickering candle set on the dusty floor, and its light was shining strongly on the face of the old *cadi*. He was seated in the dust. He was bent. His lips were moving, and there was the look about him of one who prays or talks fearfully to himself. I heard him groan:

"Ya Allah! Ya Allah!"

Half in and half out of the penumbra cast by the candle, a man lay on his face, grasping the dust with crooked hands.

I saw all this with a sort of gulp. But it was the sight of the third figure that held me spellbound, in a trance—a trance of two seconds, three, yet eternal. Roxalana was crouched against the wall at the *cadi's* side. It was just as I had seen her in my dream, but it had never occurred to me until now that she might be dead. The agony was long enough, however short. She moved. She opened her eyes.

I called her by name. I started forward at a shambling run. My legs were weak—as weak as Miss Stickney's had been; weaker, most likely. But I'd have found strength to fight the world to a standstill had there been need of it just then.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was the *cadi* and the dead man there who told us almost as much as Roxalana did herself about the things that had happened since we all had last seen each other. The *cadi*, fearful for his life, had fled from the villa with the two things in the world that he felt might still insure him against death—the paper representing the gold in Paris and Roxalana's self. A few servants had come along. The *cadi* had suspected all of them. At last he had killed one of them. The others had fled.

A nightmare for Roxalana; more of a nightmare still for the *cadi*—to judge by the appearance of him. "The Shadow of Abdul-Hamid"—and he looked it! He shrank. He looked at us with beady eyes. He plucked at his beard. Gradually, very slowly, however, he was getting back his reason, coaxing it back, as if it were timid, would run off again, like a rabbit, at the first alarm.

He called me Summerville. He swore that he was my grandfather. He swore that if he lived he could make me rich and great.

"We'll stick together," he said—"you to me and I to you!"

And he would look away, then snap his eyes back upon me, as if expectant of catching me making faces behind his back. I used my privileged position to get his revolver away from him, secretly, for I didn't like his looks.

The dead man, one of the Albanians who had been on service at the villa, Reshad and I carried off into the funereal shadows. An unsatisfactory form of burial! All the time that we were there it was as if the dead man were looking in at us from the shadows, eager to rejoin us, begging us not to leave him alone in the dark.

Roxalana was in the arms of Miss Stickney almost before I could speak to her at all.

"Where is Monsieur Beau?" I asked.

"He left—left to look for you, as soon as he found out that you were gone. And he didn't come back," Roxalana said. "And some one brought word that all of our friends were being arrested. I didn't want to leave. I wanted to wait for—for you—and Miss Stickney."

"We'll stick together," babbled the *cadi*, "you to me and I to you."

He gripped me so tightly with one of his clawlike hands that it hurt.

"Where shall we go?" I asked.

"You'll get me back beyond the Bos-

porus," he said. "I know this place. It's full of spirits, fleshed and unfleshed. Tell me, Summerville, you'll get your old grandfather away—away. I'll make you rich. I'll make you famous." He jerked me closer. "I'll give you *her*," he whispered.

We got under way laboriously.

Besides the candles that had been left the *cadi* by his stampeded servants, the old man had an electric torch which he flashed about him. He headed the march.

I still held Roxalana by the hand. I felt the delicate fingers against my own grow warm as they gradually tightened their hold. We moved on, faster, faster, like sheep, in the wake of that bent old shepherd who called himself my grandfather. He seemed to be familiar with the place. He seemed to be more or less at home there among the shadows, himself a shadow. He led us along a gradual ascent around many curves, off into a much narrower passage, where there was a flight of stairs. The steps were worn.

Miss Stickney, nearest the *cadi*, steadied him as he went up. I followed with Roxalana. Behind us came Reshad, holding a candle above his head.

The *cadi* turned.

"Blow out that light!" he ordered harshly in French.

He flashed the electric torch over us, as Reshad, grasping the meaning of what had been said, put out the candle he carried. The old man fumbled impatiently at a complicated piece of mechanism. It was stubborn to his touch. He handed his electric torch to Miss Stickney. He seemed to take pride in making this inanimate metal do his will, as if he had invented it—as perhaps he had.

A door opened, and just then Miss Stickney, unfamiliar with the torch, let the light go out.

There was a whisper: "Who comes there?"

The cadi answered in French: "*Je suis Monsieur Beau.*"

"Kismet!" came the strange voice; and then: "*Inshallah!*"

There was a blow, a scuffle, a slight cry from the old man, but not of fear. It was savage. Then a sharp command: "*Jean, à moi! What's this?*"

He had called me by my first name. He had called me to help him. There was something in his voice that blotted out all my distrust and my dislike. I'm glad to admit it. I felt a touch of sentiment that, with a little nursing, in spite of all he had done and said, would have become loyalty and love. I jumped up the several steps, groped the torch from Miss Stickney's hand, and pressed the button.

The old man was leaning against the wall with his hand at his side. He had been staring straight ahead of him into the darkness.

"Did I hear some one," he asked, "or was it a ghost?"

I answered: "Some one was there."

"Look and see," the cadi gasped.

The door had been swung back wide. I flashed the torch about a cryptlike room with whitewashed walls. It was empty.

"I heard a voice," I said.

"Are you sure?"

"Effendi," said Miss Stickney, "I also heard the voice."

"And I," said Roxalana.

She had pressed forward. She was no coward. I saw her put her arm about the old man's waist.

"What is it?" she asked. "You are hurt. You've walked too fast and far."

He looked at her. He was slightly dazed. Something had occurred that he couldn't understand. Nor could any of us, for that matter. The voice we had all heard could have been no echo, no ghost, although the place looked ghostly enough.

Roxalana was still supporting him as

he pressed forward. He was talking now in Turkish, now in French.

"Where are the others?" he kept demanding. And then: "It is, indeed, that they have played me false."

"You are hurt!" cried Roxalana again.

"Not so!" he retorted savagely.

It was one of those crises when both time and incident, and likewise thoughts and feelings, are as if compressed; when they are like those minute paper flowers that the Chinese make—unrecognizable and unclassifiable at first, only to be expanded and regarded with slow leisure. We were all in the room beyond the stairs. The door was closed behind us. There was a confusion of perception.

What was definite was that the old man had found another door in the whitewashed wall, and that it had opened. We stood there in a sweeping gust of dusky light and vague sound, and we were looking out into a building so spacious that it suggested unreality. There was a glimmer from a myriad little lamps, and, on the floor in this drizzling light, there seemed to be thousands and thousands of men, rigid or twisting in all the attitudes of suffering. It was from this prostrate multitude that the curious, vague moan of sound went up.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Then I recognized it. This was the interior of Sancta Sophia, and it was filled with wounded. This was the place that had been filled with Christian refugees, ages ago, when the victorious Turks broke in. This was the place where the ruffians of the Fourth Crusade had caroused. This was the place where other spectacles like this had been staged for more than a thousand years.

Columns and domes lifting to a nebulous height, and distances like those of

the open air, yet dimness and suffocation, and this above all—a feeling of absolute helplessness. It was a coagulated pool, from which souls were escaping upward like a vapor. And the only distinct phrases that escaped from all of those men, and from the old man who had called himself my grandfather, was: "Allah! Allah!" and, now and again, "*Inshallah!*"

There were men who hurried about, but dimly, ineffectively—surgeons, or surgeons' helpers, men of the Red Crescent; but in the overpowering space they were lost. They were like ants; and the stifling air pressed down upon them and made them stoop.

At the sight of that camp of suffering it was as if the old man forgot everything else. He was as if hypnotized. I heard his murmured "*Yasik!*"—as one might say, "The pity of it!" He still had his hand at his side. He started forward at a feeble trudge; and he was like some one who sees and talks to a presence invisible.

"I also," he whispered. "I also!"

Roxalana made a movement to follow him, but Miss Stickney drew her back. It may be that there wasn't a place in the world just then where women were more needed, but they were barred. I plucked at the old man's sleeve.

"Grandfather!" I whispered. "Grandfather!"

I was silenced by what took place. He paid no attention to me. He got out of the low shoes he wore. He was still in the sort of dress he had worn when I first saw him—European as to the most of it, Turkish as to the way he wore it and the fez that rested on his ears. Laboriously he prepared to prostrate himself. I saw him put up his hands like the hard of hearing—that gesture of the faithful who would hear the voice of God.

There was an ejaculation beside us. Ten feet away, a man had reared him-

self up to a sitting position. His face was yellow and black, unshaven, cadaverous. His eyes were glowing. Then there was another, and another. Some were in brown uniforms, foul and stained. Others were in all the shapes and shades of dress that one might find on a journey from the Yemen to Albania. All of them were stirring, staring, gasping things that I couldn't understand.

"*Ya Allah!*" cried the old man. He was on his knees. He wilted back against me as I stooped, and he began to babble in French, only half aloud, only half coherently: "Look at me well, my children. Look at me well. I also! I also! I also have been wounded for the faith!"

I fumbled for him, and was helping him to his feet. I felt his slight weight, his thin feebleness—and something else. He may have been wounded in the spirit—it may have been that to which he referred; most likely it was. But he was wounded in the body as well. Back there at the door at the head of the stairs he had been struck. He had been concealing it ever since, and he had been bleeding ever since.

He stretched out a hand. His eyes were burning. His mouth opened and closed in silence several times. He was speaking in French.

"These are my children," he said, "and they don't know me! They don't know me!"

"The padishah! The padishah!"

It came to me in a compound whisper. It was a voice that was as subdued and yet as big as a breeze in the nighttime. To this day I don't know whether it was actually the voices of the wounded there in the mosque of Sancta Sophia, or a voice inside my brain.

"The padishah! The padishah!"

I held him to my side. I could feel his blood on my fingers. I wondered at his lightness; and I wondered what I

should do. Call for help, when I couldn't speak Turkish? Carry him back through the door by which we had come? Leave him here? And what was happening to Roxalana and Miss Stickney?

There was a movement toward us of men on their hands and knees, of those who dragged themselves closer by using their hands alone. There was a sobbing moan, louder than any sound that I had thus far heard. It indicated, somehow, that the wind might become a storm. Mere flashes of thought, but they were like flashes of lightning, in which I saw the excitement spreading. The pool of invalids about us was no longer coagulated. There was that crawling movement in it. The voices were becoming more distinct.

A hand touched my arm; another voice spoke in French that was no louder than a whisper, but that went circling through my brain like a flight of birds:

"Effendi, back! For the love of God!"

It was Nemira Bey. He was there with some of his men. I turned just in time to see several of them struggling with a black figure that I recognized. It was Kavak.

It appears that Nemira Bey and his men had got a warning of the turn in events, had gone on to the villa, only to find it in the hands of the enemy, had hastened thence to the mosque, and there had captured the eunuch. They had wrenched the truth from him, some way or other—only it was the truth as Kavak believed it. He thought he had just killed Monsieur Beau, in pursuance of the orders he had received from Bayezid. He was a traitor. They dragged him along.

When Kavak saw the *cadi*, recognized the truth, he was as a man who stands before the judgment throne.

The *cadi* accused him, in Turkish. He shrieked it:

"There's the dog that struck the imam," or words to that effect.

Then he reeled, and both Nemira Bey and I caught him in our arms, carried him back and away from those maimed specters who were stretching out their hands and their spirits to him.

A wonderful man was Nemira Bey, and is. No nation is decadent as long as it can produce men like him. For what is a nation? Not an impersonal thing! It is you, and me, and some one else. And as we are—in our habits and deeds and hopes—so the nation is; which, after all, is the sum and substance of patriotism or treason.

Nemira Bey whispered an order, and those of his followers who held Kavak thrust him forward with shrill cries. It was the diversion needed. Nemira had caught the last words of the old man, had taken in the situation, had found a solution to it while I was still groping like a man gone blind in his brain. His men hurled Kavak forward and cried out that he was a regicide, and they demanded his death.

No muezzin's call from a minaret could have had a more compelling effect upon the multitude of wounded men. For was not this also a holy task to which they were summoned? They responded to it as if it were. I had a swift vision of them rising up in their bandages. On the altar of retribution they were throwing all that was left to them of earthly strength.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Peril was pressing. It was everywhere. We moved in it, breathed it, felt its wings on our face. We skirted an open square. There were just we five in the group, the *cadi* and the two women, Nemira and I; for the others who had come to the mosque with Nemira scattered on our flanks.

"Hadn't we better call one of the surgeons in there?" I asked.

"There in the mosque," said Nemira, "are men who would do to the *cadi* what they did to Kavak. We must get him away. If this gets out to the crowds of Stamboul——"

"*Inshallah!*" the old man whispered.

"Where is Monsieur Beau?" I asked.

"Missing," Nemira answered. We weren't pausing as we talked. "There is only one thing that I regret," he added softly, "and that is that I can't kill that dog Bayezid before he does any further harm. He pretended to be one of us. The lives of none of us will be worth a piaster as long as he remains in life and power."

Some one sprang after us. It was Reshad. He held a brief colloquy with Nemira. He embraced me, murmured the Turkish equivalent of "Good luck," and ran away crouching; to find Monsieur Beau, Nemira said. Monsieur Beau had rescued Reshad from some misery or other, when Reshad had been filled with the heat and folly of youth, and ever since then Reshad had been as a son to the old Frenchman.

In the blue darkness, I saw one man stab another, and I thought it was murder, until I remembered that this was war.

I asked about the submarine—Nemira's war boat that had brought me through the Dardanelles. Gone, also, like so many other of the stays and props of the revolution, and whether or not through the treachery of Bayezid he did not know.

We paused under the darkness of what might have been a stable, or what might have been a deserted coffee shop, and there we tried to examine the old man. But he wouldn't let us. He said that he wasn't hurt; that all in due time he would have his trifling scratch attended to; and that if we loved him and Turkey and the true faith, then let us get ahead to the place for which we were bound.

We tried to examine him anyway.

"Go on!" he shrilled, and his voice was like a rocket. It was enough to bring all the stragglers of the neighborhood about our ears.

"Bayezid, by this time, is on our trail," said Nemira. "We can't delay. There is no place in Stamboul. Galata and Pera are impossible, even if we reached them by water, for there the Germans watch because of the foreigners who remain. Our only hope is to get away across the Bosphorus. That hope grows slim. If they find out where we go——"

"There is no will but the will of God," said the old man. "Let us be on our way."

"He is dying," whispered Roxalana.

"No," I said fiercely, and I had no thought of consoling her. I was thinking only of the work in hand.

We lifted him again. We crowded through a fence of woven sticks to let a squad of soldiers pass. They were moving at the double-quick. Why, we never knew. But we did know, all the time, that what had just occurred back of us, in the mosque, was spreading alarm. Had Kavak been rescued? Or had he talked before he died? And by this time hadn't Bayezid Pasha learned all that there was to learn in the deserted villa?

I had lost one of my shoes, and I limped with the burden we carried; and I hadn't any idea how far we went or whither we were going—now slow, now fast—through darkness and creepy light, through stenches and sweet whiffs of air from the sea, flanked always by those guardian shadows. But sadness and fatigue were so heavy upon me that I thought never again should I know rest and happiness, when, right ahead of us, across a vacant space, I saw a boundless glitter of water beyond a hedge of rocking masts.

"I got a couple of boats over there," said Nemira. "Most of the boatmen were with us. Most of the common

people were with us. *Dieu de bon Dieu!* Will our time never come?"

He almost sobbed.

It was one of those nights—there were many of them, so I have since learned—when Constantinople was ready to believe that at last, at last, the historic Golden Gate was to be opened to let the Christian conquerer come in. Intermittently the guns had barked at the sailing birds of the Allies' aeroplanes. The city itself was rife with sedition and rebellion. There had been a revolt among fresh contingents from Asia Minor. Two foreign officers were but newly slain. Thousands of maimed and dying continued to arrive. So did the dribbling, but never-ending, stream of hungry, untamed refugees, deserters, stragglers from broken regiments; and now, on top of it all, had come this shattered, exploded revolution.

It was all epitomized in the world within my sight—the broken and shrunken old man who had been one of the mighty, the dark streets, the empty boats, the dome that had sheltered so much of grief and hope, Roxalana; and there was the sky. I gave it a glance. Perforce, I looked again. It seemed incredible. There was the sky, as calm, as beautiful, as unchanged, as if it looked down upon nothing but peace and brotherly love; more beautiful than ever, for there was a new moon—a glistening, slender crescent, with a star between the tips of its shining horns.

It was in the light of it that we embarked in two swift rowing caiques that were waiting for us—the old man and Nemira and I and the two women were in one boat, with six oarsmen. There were almost a score in the other. The men were pulling at their oars. It was a time when there was no depending on sail, when a motor would have been too noisy.

"Have you the paper?" Nemira breathed.

"No." I knew well enough what paper he referred to.

"Where is it?"

"He still has it," I answered. "I believe he has."

"We can't leave it with him," said Nemira. "Our enemies—and his—will get the money from the Banque de France as soon as they find out what has happened; and find it out they will, sooner or later. We'll have to look for it."

He barely breathed these words. They were almost silence. They were audible to me only because I could see his face, and because I knew his intent. It seems impossible that the old man should have heard; and yet he scrambled to his feet. It was the last flicker of the flame of life and will.

"Who would rob me?" he asked.

We were afraid that he would go overboard. The boat rocked. The thing had happened so suddenly that the men had stopped rowing, some resting in the middle of their stroke, others backing water.

He stood there, crooked, both hands at his sides. He began to fall. We caught him. We lowered him between us. His head lay on Roxalana's knees, and Miss Stickney took one of his withered hands, and prayed, doubtless, behind her Turkish *charchaf*, the same prayers that she would have prayed in New England.

The other boat was backing to our side. There was a moment of intense stillness, and, through this, as something heard, but not noticed, came the distant tat-tat of a motor. The new moon glimmered, with the star, in a sky that was silvery purple.

I looked down at the old man's face. There was an expression of enlightenment on it; just that. I bowed closer. He murmured something. The vision in his eyes went out. Miss Stickney reached over and closed his eyes, but

somehow that expression of enlightenment remained there, even then.

There was a husky murmur from the men, one tiny, stifled sob from Roxalana.

Now, the last words of that old man were these:

"My sins are great, but greater is Allah's mercy."

And what the others said was:

"May he find acceptance with Allah!"

That murmur; then a flash off to the south of us—a flash that stabbed the blue-black velvet close to the water's surface, a ripping bark, the splash and swift whirl of a shot that skimmed the waves not more than thirty feet in front of us.

"Bayezid!" said Nemira. "*Ya Allah!*"

CHAPTER XXIX.

Nemira Bey was a warrior—not just a mere soldier or sailor, but a warrior. It was he who taught me the meaning of the word, gave me an ideal of the craft for the rest of my days. He showed me that night.

Before I knew what he was intending, or what I should do, he had the two boats together, was shifting the women from the boat in which we were to the other; and they, like the men, were as obedient as I myself would have been. The boat with Miss Stickney and Roxalana in it drew forward, but kept in touch with us.

Momentarily I had been expecting another shot. None came. Only that popping tat-tat of the motor grew louder, and I could see the indistinct blur of the boat itself taking on shape and substance as it drew nearer. And, as I watched, I could also see what Nemira was about. He was searching the clothing of the old man who had just died.

We were all very close to death or capture. That relentless enemy of ours was drawing up on us. There was no escape, and what he would do to us

when he got us it was enough to make one sick to contemplate. Yet speedily, thoroughly, with concentrated passion, Nemira went on with what he had to do.

All that I could do was to watch that approaching power boat, take what might be my last look at the black silhouette that was Roxalana, and try to make my breathing deep and long, as I had been taught to do by a fighter friend of mine. That's the thing to do whenever the excitement of danger seems likely to get the better of you.

Nemira had seized a piece of iron that had done service as an anchor. In a turn, he had lashed it to the cad's feet. There was a rippling splash. The dead man was gone.

Many a mystery has been swallowed up by those clear-running waters of the Bosphorus. This was but another of them.

I was to think of these mysteries in a very little time. For, out of the daze and the desperation that had come over me with the approach of Bayezid, and that were now thickening to a climax, there came to me a shaft of hope, as swift and bright as the flash of a gun.

I've always been a good swimmer, have always loved the water and felt at home in it. Perhaps, after all, I'm a primitive, with some sort of a memory in my cells of the time when all the life on the planet was contained in the clean, strong sea water. We're all haunted by the smell of it—the smell of salt marshes at night, the taste of a salty breeze on our lips.

The power boat putted to a drifting stop when it was still twenty yards away, and a small searchlight swept over us. Then came an order that I knew to be "Hands up!" There was the click of weapons. I saw a small cannon or machine gun mounted on the enemy's bows.

My brain was still trying to tell me that perhaps it wasn't Bayezid Pasha,

after all; but my inner conviction was otherwise. My conviction was right.

The power boat drifted up. The stern of it came around until it was right at the side of me. And I saw him—Bayezid, sleek, tense. He was shining with hate and triumph—just that. He had seen the women. He had seen me. His mouth was stretched in something that wasn't a smile. His nostrils were dilated. His cheek bones looked high. His eyes shone.

It wasn't I who did what followed—not what followed immediately. It was some demon, or angel, that came out of the night, out of the sea air, and possessed me.

I felt myself launching through space. Bayezid reared up to meet me. My fingers found his neck. For a moment my feet were on his knees. He was strong. He would have had me for keeps if he hadn't stood up; but instead of falling back into the cockpit, we went over to the gunwale. We balanced there like a tumbling rock; then went headfirst into the black water.

Down we went. I didn't struggle. I didn't seem to move. My muscles were as static as my lungs. I could see the old cadi looking up at us from his own private depths, glad to see the young men who had come to visit him.

Down and down! This was a record dive. Part of the time it was Bayezid who was sinking me, and again it was I who was sinking him. We went down as gently as babes, rolling slowly. There was a soft envelope around us, as if we were padded with cotton wool; and the only strife in the world was concentrated in my lungs and fingers.

"Enough of this!" came a wireless communication from Bayezid Pasha.

I got the message—telepathy, perhaps. Not very brusquely he pushed me from him. And now we'll see what's going on above. I climbed up the water like a fireman in a hurry, with long reaches and high steps, skipping most

of the rungs. Up—up—two stories, three stories— Wouldn't I ever get to the roof, where I could breathe again?

I plunged up into the night and gave a gulp that hurt. I swallowed the air with my mouth open.

At the same time there came an avalanche of sound. I thought they were applauding me for having stayed under so long. I wondered if any one had been holding a stop watch on me. I rolled over on my back, with my face to the sky, just to let them see how calm I was. An old college trick.

But just then the sound became definite to my ears, and I recognized that a fight was on. It made me remember everything. I started to swim toward the boats. They were perhaps thirty or forty feet away.

I was crazy to get into that fight. I could see that it was rough work. I could see two figures, particularly, hammering away at each other.

I shouted Roxalana's name.

At the same instant I got a blow on the top of my head. I was on my side. I had swum right into some one. I turned over. I saw Bayezid Pasha.

We squared off, treading water, looking at each other. Bayezid had lost his fez. His hair was snaky on his forehead. He was panting back his strength.

"I thought I had finished you," I said.

I'm not so sure, now, that we had any conversation at all—not by words—but I'm certain that we communicated with each other, perhaps like fighting seals or whales.

"You've got a long way to go before you'll finish me," he said, keeping his distance.

"You're the man who beat me," I said.

"You're nothing but a dog, and I'm an Osmanli," said he.

I could see that he was fidgeting with his clothing under water, but I merely

put it down to the fact that he was uncomfortable. I wanted to be polite.

"Fix yourself up all you want to," I said, "for you're dead."

I was willing to gain time. I hadn't got my strength back yet—not by a good deal.

A life buoy that had evidently been cast from the power boat came bobbing up to us. We both grabbed it at the same instant. He was on one side of it, and I was on the other. I did my best to think of some way in which I could turn this new element in the fight to my own advantage, but for the life of me I could think of nothing but Bunker Hill.

Bayezid Pasha made a queer lunge at me under water, but he failed to reach me. Then, suddenly, he flashed his hand across the white ring of the buoy. There was a knife in his hand. He was trying to cut me.

I had to let go of the buoy, but I grabbed his wrist.

With his free hand he smashed me in the face.

So neither of us had the buoy now. We clawed and clutched, and not until then did it occur to me that I was doing the thing that other men had done since the world began.

I was fighting for my life.

CHAPTER XXX.

It's delicate business, this wrestling in the water. You have to keep thinking of your own air all the time. Pretty rough work we used to indulge in, occasionally, when playing water polo in the tank, especially if the rowdies from some mucker college started it. But no one was looking for outright murder, even then. At any rate, I was remembering all I knew. I was in frantic haste. The thought that I might not be alive in a minute or two spurred me on.

The point is to keep the other chap's

head under water and your own head up. Foolish to waste strength gripping a fellow's throat when the water will do it for you. That was a mistake I had made before, but I wasn't going to make it again.

Still gripping Bayezid's knife wrist, I got back of him. I secured his left foot. I twisted and pulled. His head went under while mine was up. There was something luxurious about it. Every gasp of air, while he had none, was nectar. I reveled in it, was lavish of it, even while I fought to keep myself clear, to hold to that squirming, jerking mass of brawn.

Then the life buoy came bobbing near again. It was my undoing. I couldn't resist the temptation. I was getting tired. I let go of Bayezid's wrist. With that float under my arm, I could master him in no time, be done with a disagreeable job. But no sooner had I got my arm over the buoy than I felt a streak of fire along my thigh. It couldn't have been Bayezid, I thought. It must have been a shark or a sawfish.

I kicked myself free, and was a yard or two away. The boats were closer now. Those two men who had been striking at each other went overboard. So did another man—dead. I could tell by the way he took the water. Then I saw Roxalana for the first time since the fight had begun. She was crouching in the bow of one of the boats. She had discarded her *charchaf*. She was looking out over the water.

Not the finger of Hercules could have so stimulated me.

Then this vision was cut off by a head that came up a couple of feet in front of my face, and there was Bayezid again, looking for me. He had lost his bearings for a moment, and likewise had his face toward the boats. Perhaps he, too, saw there what I had seen—the girl we both coveted.

I got my hand into his hair this time, but when his hand came up, with the

knife in it, I let go of his hair and used both of my hands to hold his wrist. I stood on his shoulders as I forced him under. But this time he got a good grip on the coat I wore. I had considered that coat a flimsy thing—tawdry cotton—but now it clung to me with the tenacity and soft-fingered strength of seaweed.

He must have had his hand knotted into it, from the way he held. But he had gone under before I did. I was already a second, two seconds, to the good when, with my face back, the water closed over my open eyes, when the crescent moon became a shimmering wash, a dulling blur, then disappeared.

Bayezid and I took up that interchange of ours. We were floundering, and we couldn't breathe, but our brains were as communicative as if we'd been sitting at a tea table.

He said: "You're stronger than I thought you were, but you come from a white-livered race, and it's impossible that such as you should get the better of such as I, who come from a race of men."

I got this message in every fiber and ion of him. It was some interval before I could formulate my reply. But I got it to him, in the very thick of the struggle.

I said: "I promised you that I'd kill you, and you can say what you want to, but the race I come from keeps its promises."

Said Bayezid: "We'll see."

"All right," I said. "We'll see."

We bobbed about on the surface a bit, how long I do not know—when there was a flicker of precious light, when the muffled sounds of that other conflict broke around us, merrily, like the cries of children just out of school. Maybe we both caught a breath. I don't know. The thing exists as a memory of something not noticed as an experience.

Personally, I know that, little by little, the frontiers of the very universe were

tightening up, closing in. There was no longer any interplanetary space, no movement of the earth or stars, no creation outside of us whatsoever. There was just this knot of primordial energy in the cosmos. All the rest was a void.

Through this black void, where there was no air, no other life of any kind, we moved, faster and faster. We weren't in communication any longer. We were fused. We were like one fish.

It must have been like that the day before the Voice said: "*Fiat lux!*"

Right there, in the blackness and the loss of identity, some cell with life still in it blossomed out. That's the only way I can express it; and I knew that there was a woman who was waiting for me.

People don't always say what they mean when they use that word, "love." They think that it has something to do with restaurants and diamond rings, with petty jealousies and amiable indulgence. They do. I know I did. I know that I had always looked at it askance, or platonically, or not at all, or in the terms of the "Rollo Books," or in the glossed-over columns of the daily press.

The real meaning of it came to me down there close to the scoured bottom of the Bosphorus or the Marmora—where there was already one dead man I had known, where so many other senseless human relics had drifted in their day; and it brought light with it, just as if the Voice had spoken.

It brought me reason. I knew that this was death that was trying to delude me. I became fully conscious. I wasn't terrified. I was exalted in my purpose to get back to Roxalana and the rest of creation.

With both feet I shoved. I tore myself free from the clogging coat. It couldn't have been holding so very fast, after all.

Then, with my hands up, I prayed for the open air. I was shooting upward.

Almost too late! It took me a pretty long time to recover myself, even when I had the moon on my face again. I floated. I tasted blood, and I vaguely guessed that I was bleeding from the nose and ears. I was taking a vacation after a hard season's work; that's the way it seemed to me.

Then it began to dawn upon me that this thing that had happened to me was merely one of the oldest stories in the world. I turned over and looked until I located the boats. They were pretty far away, but there was a quietness about them that suggested that the fight there, as well, was over.

I didn't have to ask how. Wasn't my own fight an answer to any questions like that? Roxalana would be there. She would be waiting for me. She would be mine. Bayezid Pasha was dead. I was like a tiger that has fed.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There will always be this other tale to add to the collection of Queen Scheherezade, so far as I am concerned—how, right from a watery grave, I was drawn into a boat somewhere between Europe and Asia, and died, and went to heaven, and opened my eyes to find an houri looking down at me, an houri I had known on the earth plane as Roxalana. I glimpsed it as I was getting my senses back, and while Miss Stickney bandaged me.

I was very nervous. I had the shakes. I hadn't fainted—God save the mark! But there was a brief period when I wasn't quite sure where I was; and so, when I became satisfied that I was in a boat, and that Roxalana was so near, I didn't know what else to do but take advantage of my situation as an invalid. So I clapped my arms about her neck. I drew her face to mine. I kissed her.

"And now we are engaged," I said.

"Do they always do that in your country?" she asked, frightened.

"Yes, dear," said Miss Stickney.

"Oh!" said Roxalana.

A strange, strange world, to the conventional man; the oldest world of all to those who live. By chance, by luck, by the strength of my arms, and by the strength of the demon, the *dæmon*, bred into me by my ancestors, I had conquered my worst enemy, and I had stolen his girl from him.

I had missed a great fight while having one. There was only one *caïque*, but far back across the nebulous waters, under the illusive light of the young moon, I saw the other, and not far from it was the power boat in which Bayezid Pasha had come out so proudly to bring us back. Now he was dead. So were several of his men. But most of them, so Nemira Bey told me, had been ready to throw up their hands the moment the pasha and I went overboard.

"They'll carry the alarm to Stamboul," I said.

"No," said Nemira. "Their idea is to steal the boat and hide out with it somewhere in the Marmora, to smuggle arms for the next revolution."

Nemira Bey and seven or eight men at the oars, Miss Stickney, Roxalana, and I, in a Turkish boat on the Marmora, Constantinople a dimly seen reef against the sky line, the tranquil, dispassionate sky above, with a new moon in it as a harbinger of that "next revolution" just mentioned.

"All revolutions are good," I said. "For, after all, the world turns forward, not back."

"You were to have had your place in one," said Nemira.

"It is not too late," I said.

We shook hands. I tried him with a "sign" I had learned from Monsieur Beau, and he gave it back to me. We were of the same brotherhood.

"You're an honor to your grandfather," he said.

Now, whether he referred to the old man who had led us to the mosque of

Sancta Sophia, and there had received his deathblow, and who had been hailed as the sultan's self, Abdul-Hamid, I am not at liberty to divulge. They say that Abdul-Hamid is still alive, still in confinement, at a certain palace on the Bosphorus. Let them say it. And let history pass judgment upon him. But I, for one, shall never forget the supposed dead man I watched and watched, one afternoon, only to discover later that he was alive. Did not the cadi himself say that the world was filled with illusions of sorts?

"There's only one race in the world," said Nemira Bey. "It is yours and mine. I've often thought about it when I worked, and my work has been in peace as well as in war. There are only two frontiers. They are life and death. There is only one enemy, and he is the oppressor. The old war cry here in Turkey was, 'The faith!' To-day, it's 'Liberty!'"

"I'd fight for that any time," I said.

"*Inshallah!*" Nemira Bey spoke more softly still. "We have failed in this play, my brother, but we are young, and the world is large. We'll never settle down to peace and quiet—will we?—as long as there is injustice in the world."

I hesitated before I answered, not because I was in doubt as to what my answer would be, but because it was such a monument to the self, the ego, the old John Summerville that I had buried. I could see this earlier John Summerville taking his comfort, talking in platitudes, quilted about against the hardships and the sufferings of other men, not only afraid to die, but afraid to live; prating of moral courage, and displaying none of it; nursing cowardice, and calling it forbearance. I thought of the Prophet of my own faith, who had defied the tyrants of His nation, of every other prophet in the history of the world. Fighting men, all of them! Fighting men—from Noah to John

Knox! It was of their company that I would be.

I said so.

"Because I'm about to disappear," said Nemira. "There is a price on my head. I'm going back through the Dardanelles, to find, perhaps, another submarine, and then— John, there'll come another day, and I want to find you."

We could be a trifle lavish with a show of sentiment, for we were about to say good-by. There was a sailing caique, with a lighter at its side, moored in a lonely bight of one of the Princes' Islands. We made our way to this. There our Turkish friend was to remain in hiding until he could get to friends "outside." We were to have gone there earlier—he and I—with what influence on the future history of the world?

It is never too late. There's always to-morrow. I knew that the adventure wasn't ended even when I held Nemira Bey's hand in mine in a farewell clasp.

May he live long! May he find, at last, acceptance in Allah!

Once more the boat was ghosting silently across the broad expanse of waters. We were headed for the Asiatic shore this time, where we hoped to find safe refuge for the present. Roxalana was weeping, now that the worst of the excitement was over—weeping for that old man whom she had loved, who likewise was ghosting now in another silent boat, to another shore darker and more mysterious even than that of Asia.

We did not speak. It would have been too dangerous, anyway, for there was no telling how many patrol boats might be in the neighborhood. But we had no inclination to speak. There was too much to think about, too much of emotion; and, gradually, Roxalana sank closer and closer to my side, like a sleepy and worn-out child. Was I not to be her protector forevermore? I put my arm about her. Like a little veiled

widow she was, in her *charchaf*. My spirit rose like smoke from an altar.

I was sitting there like that, with the good Lord only knows what dreams spun of the new hopes in my breast, when we came, at last, under the watchful, brooding shadows of the Asiatic shore. Another continent, another world, a trifle dark at present, but with the history of all humanity back of it, with the universal hope and wisdom of humanity ahead.

We landed on a rocky promontory. Miss Stickney tried to make the boatman accept money, but he would have none of it. He crossed his forearms on his breast. All that he asked was that Allah the Compassionate follow us and protect us for the remainder of our days.

So we gave him a Christian blessing in return. We shook hands, and he rowed away into the blue shadows in the direction of the Golden Horn.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Not far from the place where we landed there was a house, where some friends of Miss Stickney's lived, a missionary and his wife. Too much about them I dare not tell. Suffice it to say that they were of the earth's nobility. They had been living in this Moslem land for about thirty years, and they still had the minds and the morals, the inner life and the outward aspect, of the Ohio town that had nourished their youth. They were a couple who had grown gray together, who referred to each other as "father" and "mother"; who liked American buckwheat, when they could get it, but were patient without it; who were ready, by day or by night, to surrender their comfort for others; who gave of their time, their substance, and their sympathy to any one who needed them.

I tell you they gave me abundant food for reflection, along with their chicken-

broth, those days I was under their roof.

They put me to bed—a Michigan bed—in a room the windows of which, on one side, commanded a view of the sea, and, beyond the sea, of the outskirts of Constantinople; and, on the other, a road that wound off through cypress trees toward a neighboring town. Two wonderful views! But the most wonderful part of it was this—there, on a high pole by the garden gate, an American flag curled and fluttered all day in the breeze. The red, white, and blue of it were as clean as the sky, and to the sky the flag always seemed to be signaling.

I was by way of being laid up for a week or so, on account of my leg, where Bayezid had cut me, and Roxalana would come in to sit long hours with me, and we would watch the flag. Mine! And I had got her to call it hers, as well.

I had plenty of time to reflect on the nature of my future. Roxalana and I were to be married as soon as certain papers could be secured, without fear of complications, from the American embassy in Pera. It was the nature of our hosts, even more than my previous plans, that brought me around to think of the ministry again. It wasn't that the world needed more ministers, in general, but the cloth held out certain opportunities.

You see, I was trying to argue with myself, and I couldn't get any help from Roxalana. She was hypnotized by her new flag. She said it would make a wonderful battle flag. Think what the world would have been, she said, if such a flag had waved at the head of the golden horde. She sang me songs of war and love, and out of both Asia and Europe would come breezes redolent of boundless liberty and youth.

At times I told myself that I had no money. At times I told myself that I'd make the world be as generous to

me—and to this bride of mine—as it had been to Kublai Khan. The latter view was Roxalana's.

We got fragmentary news from Constantinople.

Such vast events were pending that the revolution that had almost come about was dismissed with scant notice. There were no reports of it in the Constantinople papers. There were no reports in those papers at all, except the army *communiqués* dealing with daily victories. But there were rumors enough.

One of these rumors had come out of the Mosque of the Holy Wisdom. It was to the effect that certain of the wounded there had seen the old ex-sultan, Abdul-Hamid, had heard his voice, and had received his blessing. Yea—"and may Allah be our witness"—he had called them his children, had said that he also had been wounded, was about to die for the faith.

A dangerous rumor, this, for the deposed sultan had never been without his shoals and swarms of sympathizers, especially among the poor, who look not for justice or happiness in this world, anyway. So the officers and officials who crowded into the mosque ascribed this talk, piously, to delirium; and, thereupon, they ordered all those who had been thus afflicted carried off to some other place and isolated for observation.

May their sins be remitted them!

How often, in the history of this old globe, it must have happened that some vision of the truth was tabulated madness, snuffed out for the greater darkness of the world.

Kavak was dead. Bayezid Pasha was dead. We heard of other killings and sequestrations of brave men whom I hadn't known by name. But still no word of Monsieur Beau.

My missionary friends were trying their best to get some word of him, but the thing was complicated and diffi-

cult. Beau wasn't his name. On his head, also, there was a price. He was suspected of having treated with "an enemy of Turkey"—that enemy being France—and so he was to be hanged for treason. There were placards on the walls of Stamboul, in Turkish, declaring the fact.

But I refused to be frightened. I somehow kept my faith that he was going to pull through; that some day we'd see each other again. He was so strong, so deft; there was that look in his face that goes with men who live long and confuse their enemies.

One afternoon I happened to be alone in my room. I had been lying there, with my eyes on the road. Then, suddenly, against all orders, I sat up sharply, getting a wrenching pain in my leg; but I didn't mind. I minded nothing but an apparition that had appeared out there. The beggar from Bagdad! I was sure of it. Bayezid's spy! For this fellow, like the dervish whom I had seen lurking near the villa in Stamboul, was shaggy of head and face, unclean, villainous.

And, now and then, he let out his wail:

"*Shean Pillah!*"—"Something, for Allah's sake!"

There were many people on the road, but for the most part they paid not the slightest attention to him. They themselves were too poor and miserable—old men, old women, trudging along with crates of chickens, baskets of produce. And just back of my dervish a *hamal*, or porter, was trudging along with a pack on his back, a silent, patient, laborious contrast, who did no good to the dervish's trade. To make the contrast more striking, the porter had evidently been wounded, was only recently out of military service. There were many such about, trying to earn their livelihood again, with an arm or a leg missing. The *hamal* had a rag around his head. He trudged along

like a wounded horse, as strong, as silent, and as patient.

"*Shean P'llah!*" the dervish whined; then something else that made my flesh creep. He was just outside the garden wall. I couldn't have been mistaken. He had echoed that cry of his by pronouncing my name. He had said: "*Shean P'llah!*"; then, "Summerville."

It roused my fighting blood.

"What do you want?" I asked.

He repeated his cry.

"I've brought presents to you from your grandfather," he replied.

"Come in!" I said.

I was in a cold sweat, for all my courage. Here was word at last from Monsieur Beau. The dervish passed on into the garden, and out of my sight. I hadn't even noticed that the *hamal* had followed him. There was a longish wait, and the dervish entered the door of my room alone. I wondered how much fight I had left in me in case of treachery.

"I bring presents for you," he said.

I was looking at him. His face wasn't bad. There was something familiar, friendly, about it. I didn't know whether to laugh or to be stern.

From the rags about his waist he brought out a piece of marble that I recognized. It was the finger of Hercules. I took it wonderingly. I was still examining it when an exclamation made me raise my eyes. The dervish had removed his turban, and—there was Monsieur Beau. In that disguise he had come seeking me.

I took his hand. I held it for a moment against my breast. I couldn't say a word—I couldn't. Nor could he, I verily believe. But after a while I said this:

"You're my grandfather. You're the Monsieur de Guise I've dreamed so much about."

"Son," he said, "why don't you ask me what that other present is?"

"I don't care what it is," I said, "since you're here."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was the requisition for five million pounds Turkish, twenty-five million dollars. That was the other present he had referred to. Not a present, of course, but a trust fund—like all wealth, rightly considered—for the advancement of the world, of the Moslem world especially.

But at any rate it was safe from the hands of the enemy; and the world is going to need a fund like that, many of them, when the great war is ended, especially the fringes of the world, so badly worn, like the fringes of any other sacred carpet.

We'll mend it, my grandfather and I and those others who have the "sign." We talked it over that night, at length, after my grandfather had washed himself and put on the clothes that Reshad had brought along in the hamper he had carried. For the *hamal*—that was Reshad.

He had traced my grandfather to a certain private prison, whither he had been taken in the hope of being made to yield unlimited ransom. As if they could ever have extracted ransom for an old lion like him! And they had not only managed their escape, but they had gone to the villa—comparatively safe, once Bayezid Pasha was dead—and there they had taken what they needed, including the finger of Hercules, including the clothes that I had worn when I left Athens, including that requisition, which had been hidden there before the *cadi* fled.

"Who was the *cadi*?" I asked.

"My son," said the real Monsieur de Guise, "I shall tell you on my deathbed, if you happen to be present, but not before."

I did not insist.

"Do you suppose," I asked, "that the

Banque de France would honor this requisition, were I to present it?"

"The officials there have been waiting for you for the past eight days," my grandfather said. "If the luck breaks right, you will receive not only the gold, but the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor—the one I forfeited so many years ago, when I had that accident with the Foreign Legion, down in Algiers."

"But I'll have to earn it," I said. "My place is at the front."

My grandfather bowed his head. He murmured the word that has come to mean so much to me:

"Inshallah!"

When I looked at him again, he was meditative, his brown eyes as if fixed on the shores of France, over beyond the length of the Mediterranean. I fingered the requisition on the counterpane. Untold wealth for the healing of wounds when the great war was over, when "the great idea" emerged from the din and the smoke. And Roxalana, timid, modest, yet as welcome and warm as a caress, came into the room, silent-footed; looked at us both with awakening eyes.

We took our supper there, just we three together, and we left the lamp unlighted as the evening fell. There was a growl of man-made thunder to the

south, as if the earth complained, and the lingering red of the sunset mingled with the haze of the sea and the night shadows until it might have been an atmosphere of smoke and blood like that through which so much of the planet rolled.

I wouldn't be a minister just yet, I decided, unless I could be a minister of the fine old fighting sort. I said so.

There was a gypsy encampment down the road somewhere. I had often heard their music while I lay there, and now we were hearing it again—plaintive, in a minor key, with a cadence like the beat of straining hearts.

It recalled all the half-formed dreams and visions I had ever had—foreshadowings of the plan that Fate had drawn. I was baffled as to understanding, but I was mightily glad, and my faith began to soar.

Still, I say this:

Suppose this is merely the first verse of the song. Suppose everything should turn to tragedy. Suppose this "last card," which brought bad luck to the cadi, should do as much for me. Do you know what I'll do? At least, I'll try to do it.

I'll stand up straight. I'll smile at the place where I think my mother is, and I'll say to myself:

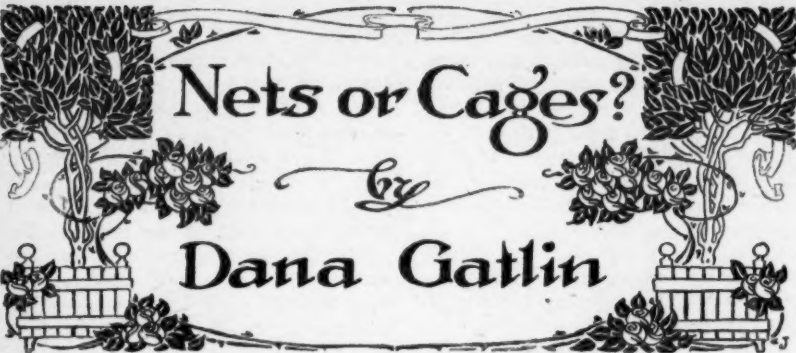
"Inshallah!"



RUBIES

THE fickle rubies sleeping in your hair
The ladies of another age shall wear,
But here are living drops in every vein
That no one's love shall e'er make red again!

SHANE LESLIE.



Nets or Cages?

by

Dana Gatlin

THOUGH Nicholas Smith is my favorite nephew, and though he is married to a girl I consider the most charming in the world, and though I'm nearly as clamorous for decorous domestic conduct as becomes a spinster of my years and family connection, I have always devoutly thanked Providence for the day Nick fell in love with a limpid-eyed actress. The reason I rejoice over his delinquency is that I so tremendously admire his wife.

Eve is to me a creature wholly delightful. Like a certain earlier heroine of the same name—a lady it must have been a delight to know—she, though uncertain, astonishing, even shocking in her manifestations, is a person inherently incapable of being dull. My first glimpse of her told me that. It was in church on an October day, the occasion of her marriage to my nephew.

I was sitting in the third pew, in the section reserved for relatives. Tired and headachy from my overnight train journey, I was divided between the maddening torture of a hatpin that was skewering one of my scant locks from a bed of screaming nerves and irritation because Amelia Badger, whom I detest even more than I do her favorite cloying scent, had wormed in-gratiatingly in beside me.

"Nick's not a bit flustered. And glum as though it were his funeral. Wouldn't you have known it?" hissed Amelia, above the crescendo of the wedding march.

I craned past her turbulent plumes. From my side back view, my nephew looked quite handsome, for he is tall and has the kind of shoulders women never fail to admire. I couldn't see his face, which not only is not handsome, but which—worse yet—is a libel on his nature. It is too thin and long, and his mouth also glues together in a line too thin and long. His eyes are steel blue, and he uses them on you like a couple of quick sword points. Yet I've seen Nick's eyes turn as soft and moody as the heart I've always known to be his.

Nick passed out of my space of vision, to be followed by a magical, moving garden of orchid-tinted girls. Bridesmaids nearly always, alas! eclipse the bride and her pallor. But not so this time. The bride appeared, and in that orgy of color she was a radiantly dominant lily, tall and white.

She drifted toward the altar with a sort of rhythm, leaving in her wake a stream of shimmer and mist. The clouds of the veil, at the other end, jealously shrouded her head. Not one feature was visible. Yet, in that first

fluttering glimpse, I sensed some quality in Eve—perhaps it was her carriage, perhaps an invisible, but eloquent aura—that prepared me for Amelia's next remark.

"She's not nervous, either!" she whispered audibly, through the tense hush just as the music ceased. "See—she's ogling the minister! Wouldn't you have known it?"

Poking my sharp shoulder a little more rigidly into Amelia's plump one, I craned my head desperately, in a resolve to see the bride's face.

When I succeeded in doing so, I perceived that Amelia's accusation still held true. Eve's eyes were fixed on the minister with a serene, mysterious gaze such as has at once armed and shielded and betrayed the Eves and Delilahs of time. Though calm, it was deep with hints of curiosity, mirth, wistfulness, and secret understanding. Its effect of baffling mystery magnetized the poor divine—I looked to see—as infallibly as its assurance and outward *de rigueur* repelled the lady by my side. As to the latter result, however, it is too much to ask of women that they appreciate mysteriousness in other women. On the contrary, they hate it, though they usually show that dislike by pointing out specific and obvious marks for censure. This tendency Amelia now exemplified.

"I believe she's rouged! And at her wedding! Would you have believed that?"

I'd certainly have believed it of an Eve if she was convinced that the make-up would improve her appearance. And with regard to the nature of the occasion, despite Amelia's specific disapproval, it seemed to me more befitting such embellishments than that of—a funeral, say. And when should a woman be commended for striving to look her best if not at her wedding?

The responses were now over, and the opening notes of the wedding re-

cessional served as signal for that rustling and hum of comment which, in our politer circles, invariably greets the new-made bride and groom and envelops them during their trying journey down the aisle.

As they passed through my limited field of vision, I observed that Nick, though staring glumly ahead, as if at some unpleasant goal, was clutching his wife's arm in a manner far less unflattering. Of this grasp, however, the bride seemed unaware as she swayed along, still lilylike and wrapped in a kind of elusive radiance. On the delectable curves of her face the spirit of sweet gravity was written like a sonnet—this while she dropped a jewel of recognition, in the briefest, but softly sparkling, on a man who sat in front of me. He was very fat and past middle age. Speculative to a point past reserve, I turned to Amelia.

"How did Nick ever get her?"

Amelia tucked back in her beaded bag a handkerchief whose belaced folds concealed something that she had been furtively dabbing on her face—at a wedding!

"How did *she* ever get *him*, you mean!"

That was not what I meant—though the arts of Delilah never pall on me, and should be especially interesting when applied to a man of Nick's sober, woman-ignoring caliber—but before I could make any disclaimer, Amelia went on:

"It's been town talk for weeks how she's been angling for him; started right in as soon as she came, and landed him within a month. Wanted his money and family, of course."

"Where's she from?" I asked.

"Oh, from the South or the West or some other outlandish place," replied Amelia, with the zealous patriotism of a New York suburbanite. "She's been visiting the Underwoods, you know."

"Why is she having the wedding

here?" My protracted stay in Maine and the celerity of events, and Nick's preoccupation with his absorbing adventure, had combined to leave me very short on information.

Amelia's sniff was really answer enough. But she wouldn't have missed the chance to supplement it with words.

"The Underwoods are kind enough to say that since she hasn't any family and is a kind of relative, it's their place to give her a wedding." Amelia fussily gathered up her furs, which, though they must have suffocated her on that hot day, were new and expensive, and delivered her last shot: "Between you and me, I guess poor Mrs. Underwood wasn't any too sorry to see the wedding through."

I caught Amelia's insinuation. Judge Underwood was the fat old man blessed by the bride's smile as she was returning from the altar.

The judge, I observed, made the most of his relationship during the highly decorated reception, hovering around the bride and fairly purring when she spoke to him. It was as if a hypodermic of youthful vitality had been injected into him, transmuting his judicial solidity into a large, majestic playfulness. But, in his capering attendance, he was a greater fool than the other men present only in being an older one.

Watching the actions of the male contingent of "our set," and the facial expressions of the female contingent, I was convinced that Mrs. Underwood was not the only woman present who was "not any too sorry to see the wedding through"—though Heaven knows why they should consider a dangerous woman less dangerous because of marriage!

It occurred to me to wonder whether Eve's life in "our set" boded to be a happy one. Then, noting the way in which Eve's attention passed almost immediately from other women

who addressed her, as if they were of no consequence, I knew that her happiness or the lack of it would never depend on what other women thought of her.

She was being bombarded with Amelia's relentless gush when I came up to be introduced. I heard the gurgling:

"Oh, my dear—*such* a sweet bride as you were! Your gown is a perfect dream!"

Eve smiled at her vaguely, as if wondering what she had said.

"And such a wonderful color! I've always wondered how——"

But at this point, Eve, still smiling, calmly turned to the fluttering bevy of masculinity.

"It's so warm in here——" she began to murmur.

Her plaint had a startlingly electrical effect. I don't remember whether or not the house received the visitation of drafts which a dozen quick exits threatened, for just at that second my nephew espied me and sprang forward with an unconcealed pleasure that made my old heart twitch.

"Aunt Judy!" he cried. "I didn't know you'd got home."

"You'll have to do something worse than getting married, Nicholas Smith, to keep me away from the celebration."

"I'll never do anything better," he said, squeezing my hand. "You'll say so yourself when you know her."

"I say so already," I assured him, "for I've seen her."

In mute thanks, Nick smiled the wonderful, boyish smile which is the one spring of his nature that his dour, homely face cannot entirely overcrust, and touched his wife on the arm.

"Eve," he said. In that one syllable addressed to her I caught a soft minor strain that I had never before heard in Nick's voice. "I want you to meet Aunt Judy, one of my old pals."

Eve turned her big eyes on me,

serene, but mystery-darkened. They were gray, I now saw at close range; not black, as they had at first appeared.

"Aunt Judy," Nick went on, "this is Eve."

"You needn't tell me that," I said. "She wears her name for a halo. Her name couldn't help being Eve."

For a moment Eve's eyes held off, seeming to regard me from a distance, as if taking my measure. Then in each of them, I could have sworn it, a little devil flickered for a second. Her face lost its sonnet look, to flash into that of a mischievous, naughty little song.

"I like you, Aunt Judy," she said.

"You'd better," I warned.

"Why do you say that?" asked Nick, puzzled.

"Why do women say anything?" I answered. "What I should have said—and I say it now—is: I like you, too, Eve."

Eve sparkled at me almost as if I had been a man.

"I'm glad," she said. "Women usually don't like me."

"As if you'd need tell me that!" I said.

We laughed together, but Nick looked vaguely disturbed.

"I don't understand what you're laughing about," he complained. "Especially since women *do* like Eve—despite the nonsensical things she says. Why, there's never been a visiting girl in Belle Heights has had half the attention that's been shown Eve!"

Eve gurgled and I snickered.

"From the women, too," added Nick doggedly, "as much as from the men."

"Of course," I agreed. "Naturally."

"And *you* liked her right off," he said in a tone of conclusive proof.

"Nick, dear," I said, "your aunt is an extraordinary woman in that her appreciative sense can sometimes throttle her female instincts."

At that Eve laughed again. I knew I'd won her for a friend.

Yet, later, as I stood across the room watching the two of them—the clumsy, secretly romantic boy I'd always loved and the starry creature who had begun to fascinate me—I felt in my heart a first prick of uneasiness. The fact that Eve had exactly the right shade of red hair did not serve to allay my fears.

These fears, however, did not, during the first year or two of their marriage, have reason to form more distinctly than into skulking ghosts. Nick and Eve settled down in their pretty little house, which became one of the centers of town gayety. Eve had a passion for entertaining and acquired the reputation of being a successful hostess—which, considering the secret mental state of our female contingent, indicated that she must have had, somewhere in her ancestry, a diplomat of virulent strain. She was the first to take up each of the fads that, in successive infectious waves, are bound to engulf small-town society—from golf to auction bridge, from "civic welfare" to the tango. But always her dominant passion, surpassing even her addiction to the dancing mania, was the one whose germ had been born in her—the conquest of man.

She simply couldn't help it; the need of adulation was as insistent in her as the need of food—more so, it seemed at times. And her supply of the first was as unfailing as of the second. Old men and young, rich and poor, wise and foolish—every male creature in Belle Heights, I believe, who had passed the marble-playing age was individually convinced that she understood him better than he did himself. And perhaps she did. And each imagined, in turn, that he was the solitary human being who really understood her. Which undoubtedly was not the case. As for the women, understanding her not at all, they instinctively feared and mistrusted and hated her. For this

very reason, however, they submerged her all the more with false cordiality.

As for those first dim apprehensions of my own, they gradually faded behind the assurance that in her very volatility and in the numbers of her conquests there was safety. They burst into quick life again, however, that evening at Eve's house when I began to observe the way Monty Plunkett was following her about.

There were six or seven other men there, which made it all the more significant that it was Monty Plunkett who invariably reached the Victrola in time to help her adjust a new record; who, every third or fourth time, bore her off for the next dance; who vanished with her, at intervals, as she glimmered about on various hospitable pretenses.

It was on one of these last occasions, when he had just accompanied her to the dining room to give some hypothetical assistance, that I decided to help, too. As I entered the room, Eve was looking up at him from under her lashes in the most Evelike manner. I caught her murmur:

"Every man tells a woman that. But he doesn't expect her to believe it."

As, just then, both of them perceived me, I was not permitted to hear what it was that he had been telling her—which he didn't expect her to believe. But I could easily imagine it, especially since the man was Monty Plunkett.

He is one of those well-set-up, well-groomed young men, with such a clear red showing under his tan cheeks, and with such clear, cheerful brown eyes, that it is difficult to believe he is the devil's reputation would make of him. The combination of his good looks and bad reputation was not one that I would have chosen to set up against Eve.

This, the next day, I tried to tell her. But to what purpose?

"Aunt Judy"—she smiled—"can you

imagine anything more futile than a married woman and an—er—unmarried woman giving each other advice?"

I was irritated with her, and, even more, I was irritated with Nick for his complaisance. It seemed to me that a larger share of Eve's admitted powers of fascination was due her husband, and that he was blamable for not demanding this right.

This feeling of annoyance swept over me when I dropped in one evening, a week or so later, and found the house darkened, save for the library, where Nick was sitting alone over a small table. Eve, it developed, had gone to an impromptu dance at the country club.

"I'm sorry," apologized Nick. "She must have forgotten you were coming."

"Evidently," I said.

"She's young," he went on.

"Of course," I agreed. "But what has that to do with it?"

"Eh?" He looked up, surprised, from the playing cards patterned out on the table before him.

"Do you think that when she's old, she'll be very different?"

Nick fumbled a pasteboard in placing it.

"She suits me as she is," he said.

"Oh, very well, then," I said. "I'm too old a woman to 'butt in'—as you'd say—where affairs are satisfactory."

Nick looked up, quickly apologetic.

"You know I didn't mean anything ungrateful to you. You know—you understand—"

"Yes, we understand," I answered, my heart overflowing in a second, as hearts can, with a thousand memories—detailed pictures, covering twenty odd years of "understanding" with my boy. Then I gulped down the choking tide, and, glancing at the outlay of cards before him, I asked: "What's that game you're playing?"

"It's a game of solitaire. It's called 'Idiot's Delight.'"

I laughed.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Nick, at once suspicious.

"At the name—'Idiot's Delight.'"

He rumbled up the cards with a sweep of his hand. Quickly I moved over and covered his hand with mine.

"You don't mind if I call you an idiot—do you, Nickie? For you *are* a kind of one, you know."

He smiled at me then, the beautiful, whimsical smile I've always loved.

"I suppose I am, Aunt Judy. But how can I help it?"

"You can help acting like one."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning," I took up bluntly, "letting that alluring girl run about alone."

Nick gathered up the pack of cards, and began sorting them out in silence. His lips compressed themselves into that too-straight line.

"Nickie," I said a little anxiously, "surely you understand how I mean it? You know your old Aunt Judy wouldn't—for the world——"

He nodded, but his lips still held their firm muteness.

"If it hurts you, dear," I said, relenting, "if you'd rather not, even with me, discuss Eve—— But you know I love her, too——"

"Yes, I know." His voice dragged. Then: "What if she'd *rather* go alone?"

"Oh, but she wouldn't!" I said, with a show of assurance.

"I wish you were right, but I'm afraid you're wrong. Truth is, Aunt Judy, I bore her."

"Nick!" I cried, aghast. "You don't realize what you're saying!"

"I wish I didn't," he replied, straightening the edges of the pack very neatly before putting it in the case. "But it's a fact."

"What in the world makes you think so?"

"What makes any one think he bores any one?"

I blinked, and tried to think of the proper thing to say. But Nick went on:

"Most of the things she loves to do I either can't do or don't have time to do. Take this damn' dancing. Can you imagine me a tea trotter?"

At the idea of gawky Nick in the mentioned rôle, I couldn't restrain a smile. Nick, though the muscles at the corners of his mouth twitched nervously, smiled, too. The fact that he could do so explains one of the reasons why he's my favorite nephew.

"Well, anyway," I said, returning to the position of attack, "you can accompany her when *she* goes to trot. It would look better, for one thing; and for another, it would be——"

I hesitated, and Nick shot me a lightning glance of inquiry.

"It would be what?"

"Safer."

"Oh, I trust Eve implicitly," he said, a trace of smugness in his tone. "It's not that she—— She doesn't—— I mean——"

"Just what do you mean?" I asked, breaking mercifully into his floundering.

Nick visibly swallowed his embarrassment.

"Only that the very thing that makes her—bored—with me—makes her safe with other men. She craves attention, admiration, variety. It's her nature. She doesn't mean any harm by it—she *wouldn't* do any harm. She only wants to be a queen on a throne—but she wants a thousand courtiers bending the knee, all in a row. And why shouldn't she? She can get 'em at the flicker of an eyelash."

The first hint of real bitterness I'd ever heard in Nick Smith's voice I heard at that moment. The sound of it hardened me against the insatiable coquette who had hurt him.

"I know what that young woman needs!"

"A beating?" he inquired ironically.

"A good, stout halter," I returned.

"Who's going to put it on her?"

"That's what's worrying me."

Then, as Nick sat staring at me, I couldn't resist voicing the question that had been in my heart a thousand times.

"Why did she marry you, Nick?"

He straightened his body in the chair and his lips into that grim line.

"God knows!" he said.

"Surely you think she loves you?"

"Yes, I thought so—then. As much as she could love any one."

For a long silence he sat working at the loose end of the cardcase. Then he spoke slowly, as if the speaking cost him effort:

"And I thought she would grow to love me more—that's the conventional dope, you know."

I reached over and loosed the cardcase from his fumbling fingers.

"I never dreamed that you were unhappy, Nick."

"I'm not really unhappy, I suppose. I'd be unreasonable if I were. I wanted Eve, and I've got her. And if she were different—why, she wouldn't be Eve. And there you are!"

For another long silence we sat staring at each other. Then Nick jumped up, went over to the open fireplace, kicked a smoldering log into spluttering reproach, and returned to his chair.

"I don't know what made me——" he began, and in his voice there was a touch of shame. "I never thought to talk like this to a living soul."

"Maybe it's because I'm not much what you'd call a 'soul,'" I offered. "I'm just a hard-headed old woman. Tell me—with whom did she go to the country club to-night?"

"Eh?" said Nick.

That monosyllable, on Nick's lips, always pricks me to quick attention; it's a clumsy sign of evasion. With precision I repeated my question.

"Oh—let me see," said Nick, recollecting, with an effort too obvious.

"Oh, yes—it was Monty Plunkett."

"Not that man!" When I feel compelled to damn a person by mere tone of voice, it may be safely assumed that the person's not respectable.

Nick fidgeted.

"He's the best dancer in the club, I believe," he said apologetically.

"And the worst sinner."

"That's not my fault," he countered weakly.

"Well, it is yours that your wife goes to dances with him."

"Eve can take care of herself."

"She's equipped to do so—if she wants to," I responded, again stung to tartness by his complaisance.

"Now, Aunt Judy——" he began, with a show of heat.

"The capacity for morals is distinctly an acquired trait," I cut in. "None of us is naturally what is called 'moral'; and the dependability of this acquisition of ours hinges on"—I hesitated, and, looking up, caught a tense expression on my nephew's face that caused my grandiloquence to wobble off vaguely—"on many things."

What I should have liked to say concerning his own morals I neither dared nor deemed advisable to add just then.

But as for Madam Eve, I was determined she should have her "plain talk." The very next morning I sought her, to find her wandering picturesquely round in their little garden, which lay, remotely near, just behind a row of elm trees. I have said "their garden," though properly I should have said Nick's. He conceived it, fathered it, tended it, and cherished it. For Eve, untrue to one fundamentally feminine trait, did not love flowers for themselves; she appreciated their decorative qualities, of course, but even in this respect I believe she tendered them a sort of jealousy. At times, however—and I learned to recognize the flower-

seeking moods—she loved to unify herself with these living things of the soil.

This morning I suspected her as soon as I saw her. She was standing in the midst of the gorgeous spread of autumn blossoming, and the garden seemed like a splendid raiment awaiting her decision to wear it. Her head, bent over a late-blooming rose which she held in her hand, was itself a dazzling red-gold blossom.

My approaching steps jarred her from this delightful alliance back into communion with mere humanity. A hint of shadow darkened the sparkle of her repose; then she saw it was I, and honored me with a welcoming smile.

"I was just daydreaming—among the flowers," she said.

She spoke with a sweet pensiveness that married women never should have, because it is a symbol of sentimental speculations.

"An idyllic occupation," I replied. I had good reason to know—remembering the sewing basket I had carried home the night before—that there might be a pastime more profitable. Yet I esteemed flower dreaming as more desirable than, say, motoring under certain conditions. Having just seen Monty Plunkett's racing car passing Eve's front gate at an insinuatingly slow pace, I was thankful for the flower mood as well as for the garden's rear location and for the gold-splashed elms' effectual guard.

Eve communed for a last moment with the flower in her hand, then extended it for my inspection.

"Isn't it lovely?" she asked.

"Yes," I agreed, without looking at it. "But what are you doing out here in the garden? I thought gardens and cats——"

That deplorable, delightful, mischievous expression danced into her eyes.

"I'm thinking of taking up roses as a background."

"*Cherchez l'homme*," I commented. Eve laughed and nodded.

"Well, he ought to be ashamed of himself," I censured. "Making love to married women!"

"It wasn't making love," Eve denied blandly. "It was just a pretty compliment. Nothing more than millions of other men——"

"No doubt," I agreed austerely. "And that's just the point. Exactly what I've come over this morning to talk about."

Eve shot me a quick, sidewise glance.

"So I'm in for a talking to?" she said.

"You are," I assured her. "A well-deserved one."

"I'm scared!"

"You may well be. You're an artful rogue, and we both know it. That's partly why I like you, I fear."

Eve caught at the opening, and broke in with an ingenuous smile.

"You *do* like me, don't you, Aunt Judy?"

"Right you are, darling," I admitted. "And that's the reason I can't bear to think of your losing Nick."

Eve met my statement, as carefully planned as casually uttered, with a gay laugh.

"I lose Nick!" But though her laugh carried denial of the danger, her tone hinted reproof and amazement. In my heart I exulted over my achievement, though I repeated gravely:

"Yes—lose Nick."

Eve dropped her flower to the ground.

"What do you mean to insinuate?" she demanded.

"I'm insinuating nothing, Eve," I lied glibly. "I only mean that I'd be sorry to see you lose Nick. And I say it because the fact that you haven't lost him already is owing more to your luck than to your deserts."

The shadow of alarm faded from her face.

"Oh," she said, "you didn't mean—he—"

"Not actually, but potentially. Any wife who neglects her husband may, any day, discover him wandering afield."

"No. Nick wouldn't." Eve shook her head with conviction.

"Eve, come over to the bench under that elm. I want to sermonize like a dull parson, and my legs are too weak to bear me through. Now"—after I'd led her, reluctant, to the mercy seat—"you've got to hear me out this once, and I'll promise never to do it again."

Eve fixed her wide and shining eyes on me in a gaze of patient attention that said, "Go on," and swallowed a little yawn that said, "But for Heaven's sake be quick about it!"

"Eve," I said, "it's easy enough for a woman—given an iota of beauty or wit or charm, or even that most common of feminine gifts, physical lure—to win a man. It's to no woman's credit to accomplish merely that. What is to her credit is to hold her man—to keep on really being his *mate*, and to keep him really satisfied with being hers."

"Nick's satisfied," commented Eve briefly.

"Is he?" I countered more briefly.

She stiffened a little from her languorous posture.

"Isn't he? Has he been complaining to you?"

"Oh, no!" I said hastily. "Nick will never complain to any one—never fear that. But he, just as assuredly, some day—" I broke off with an artful pause. Then I continued: "When a man's wife prefers the society of other men, it's against nature to expect him to be forever faithful to her memory."

Eve tried to laugh away my solemnity.

"Dear Aunt Judy," she said, "surely you wouldn't expect an—well, an attractive woman, just because she picks

out one man to marry, to live in a cloister the rest of her life."

"Not necessarily. But the husband who shares her cloister—if you wish to term it that—for the very reason that she's picked him out to marry, certainly merits her first attention. Surely a man worth winning is worth holding. Did you ever hear what Swift said on the subject?"

"Swift?" said Eve lackadaisically. "What Swift?"

"Dean Swift, the English philosopher," I informed pedagogically.

"Oh, that old Swift. I don't remember what he said about anything. Though I think we had him in school, along with Addison and Steele and Percy's 'Reliques,' and Lamb and Beowulf and all those other fossils that nobody reads excepting to pass exams or pose as being literary."

"Nevertheless," I said, "that same old fossil, Swift, seems to have foreseen that you were coming into the world, my dear, and to have left a message for you."

"For me?" said Eve, at once prepared to revise her pronouncement of the fossil. "What did he say?"

"He made this shrewd observation," I said. "'The reason why so few marriages are happy is because young ladies spend their time in making nets instead of cages.'"

Eve sighed, and wearily looked up into the branches of the elm.

"It's like a lot of those wise-sounding adages," she declared. "Not nearly so much in them, when you come to think them over, as you first thought."

"Well, think it over a little," I advised.

But Eve, jumping up, embraced the golden heavens with a gesture that repudiated mundane counsel.

"Be sensible—" I began.

She shook her shining head.

"I don't want to be sensible!"

"Why not?"

"Because sensible people are always being depended on—they're tiresome. All bores are sensible and 'dependable'—or perhaps it's the other way about. I don't want to be depended on. I don't want to be an 'old reliable.'" Then, evidently in fear of having hurt me, she added: "Not at my age, I mean."

"At what age do you consider that 'reliability' should properly set in?" I asked, unable to hold back my smile.

Eve lifted her eyes to mine solemnly and shook her head.

"I don't know. It's only that it seems so much more is demanded from women than from men—more that is colorless and dull and fettered, I mean. And most of us, after marriage, collapse under the code. Of course it's not expected of husbands to remain lovers—for that's not the way of marriage. But it is expected of wives to settle down to prosy domesticity for all time."

"Domesticity" is the oldest institution in the world, Eve," I reminded her, a little smugly, I fear.

"Yes. And it was wished on the weaker sex in the good old days of club swinging. I've noticed that most of the 'feminine traits' that date from about that epoch are the less pleasurable ones."

In answer I sighed. At which Eve smiled.

"So I, for one," she added airily, "refuse to become prosy. Likewise, to put poor old Nick in a cage. What a silly idea that is, anyway! Let's not discuss it any more."

Nor would she—save for one after-shot:

"Besides, what do you, you dear auntie, know about marriage?"

Of course I had expected that. It's the fate of us despised "old maids" to receive, at best, a pitying smile in exchange for our views on the bigger problems of life. Which makes it the stranger that Providence has, on some

of the most vital processes, granted us the clearer vision. Eve, in her blind egotism, fancied I meant she should become "prosy," which would have been the irremediable error. For men are lyrical by nature, and demand poetry from women—or what they imagine to be poetry. This trait is the *raison d'être* of the commodity that might be termed "affinityship," which is but an eternal nourishment to what men imagine themselves to be. It would be a woman's supreme achievement to delude her husband into believing that she supplied this fancied and poetical requisite.

Moreover, could wives but see it truly, by keeping the affinity problem within the family and beyond the bounds of gossip, they would, simultaneously, be indulging themselves in fullest play at their most fascinating game; for feeding the poetical strain in one's own husband certainly requires as much skill as catering to other men.

But these convictions, grown out of my maidenly observations, I had no further opportunity to bestow upon cautious Eve. Whenever she glimpsed meddling tendencies pricking out of me, she gayly wheeled out of my reach, either literally or figuratively, like the teasing, golden butterfly she was.

And like a butterfly she continued to flutter abroad, sipping the nectar of admiration from a hundred sources. The favored fount, to my increasing concern, was Monty Plunkett. Nick had boasted that Eve could take care of herself, but I had observed men of Monty Plunkett's type before—a tantalizing combination of ingenuous naïveté and spicy wickedness, which can tempt even the wariest of butterflies to inspect too closely.

Before long, Eve's women friends—though, in verity, I shouldn't use that term, as Eve didn't have "women friends"—were sympathetically whispering about "poor Mrs. Plunkett."

Most of their gossip, of course, was fiction, though the fact couldn't be denied that Eve went out in Plunkett's wicked-looking racing car oftener than was—considered proper. All women secretly envy a woman who is daring, and envy of Eve doubtless stimulated the hushed buzz.

It was at this juncture, when Eve and Nick had been married scarcely four years, that they met Miss Letty Lang. They made her acquaintance at a dinner party at which I also was present. I sat directly across the table from Miss Lang, for which I was grateful, since I enjoyed watching her artful angling for Nick's favor. Nick sat at her left, and was evidently gratified to the extreme with his location.

Miss Lang was a pretty thing—so pretty as to keep her stage talents always a matter for doubtful speculation. Her keynote was sweet simplicity. She wore her fair hair parted in Madonna fashion, and widened her blue eyes at you with aggressive innocence. The rosy candle shades were strikingly becoming to her; they warmed her simple yet generous décolletage, deepened to a glorious red the roses in her cheeks, and lighted opalescent fires in her cool blue eyes.

She was so lovely to look at that, at first, I watched her solely for that reason. I noted that she did not talk much—women possessing her qualities of lure do not have to. She had a trick of sitting with her head demurely bowed as she listened to what Nick was saying. At intervals she lifted her long eyelashes at him in a way at once shyly sweet and eloquently admiring. The very fall of her eyelids was a tribute.

I could not determine whether she was genuinely as fascinated by my nephew as would appear, or whether this was but a sample of customary actress wiles. Regarding Nick's position in the affair, all doubt was soon

razed; though, even as to that, I'm not sure exactly how much of his first captivation was due to the charms of the lady and how much to the charms of her calling. There is something inexplicable to other women about the infallible lure of actresses. These creatures need not necessarily be beautiful or clever, or even amiable, in order to be potent. Their power of fascination is undoubtedly closely linked with the stage itself, for men every day make fools of themselves over pretty, silly, little chorus girls whom, if they were waitresses, certainly they would never notice.

But the mystery of the lives of these sprites, the unreality that surrounds them, weaves a sort of spell. They are beings not of the workaday world; they go wandering about brilliantly lighted scenes—unperturbed targets of a thousand eyes; they come popping out of those strange, mystery-darkened stage doors—pretty creatures of dash, radiance, and aplomb.

Is it their touch of boldness, perhaps, a possible raciness, that contributes to their witchery? Or is it, rather, their underlying ability to take care of themselves? A man finds it very captivating to encounter a woman who can meet him on his own ground—a dainty, lovely thing who, as Nick would say, "knows her little book." And in the actress they find such a rare being—pretty, admired, and mysterious; free thinking, free living, and highly unconventional—or if she isn't, the man is always hoping she may be. •

There are few men, at all events, who can withstand the directly applied homage of an actress; to have made a conquest of a luminary of the stage flatters them all inevitably and inordinately.

So it did not entirely amaze me to see steady old Nick emerge from behind that shy shield of his which often passes for glumness. Miss Lang, for

all her silence, held his rapt attention. He even disregarded his roasted duck, which is his favorite delicacy, thereby winning an eloquent look from the alert-eyed butler. His own look, by the time dessert came on, was so glowingly responsive to his companion's shy glances that I kept craning to see whether Eve was observing. But she was far too busy drinking drafts of admiration from two sides simultaneously to be conscious of any other woman in the room.

With equal indifference, in the last flurry of farewells while we waited in the hall for our cars, she overheard Miss Lang's parting invitation to Nick:

"Now you'll keep your promise—you will come and have tea with me?" This with a lingering upsweep of her long eyelashes.

"Thanks—yes," promised Nick a trifle hurriedly.

"Soon?" The cadences of Miss Lang's murmuring voice were, even in the briefest and truest phrase, surprisingly shaded with meanings.

Nick, however much he had appreciated this accomplishment *à deux* at dinner, now cleared his throat nervously, figuratively stepping on her toes.

Miss Lang then noticed Eve just beyond him, and added: "And you, too, of course, Mrs. Smith."

"Thanks—yes," replied Eve, parroting Nick's words.

In the car, I ruminated at large:

"She is a pretty thing, isn't she?"

To which Nick responded, "Yes," and Eve, "Who?" in the same breath.

"Letty Lang," I replied, answering the person I had really addressed.

Eve was silent.

"How do you like her?" asked Nick, almost too casually.

"Oh," said Eve, "she's one of those women that men become silly over and women despise."

"Despise?" repeated Nick, in puzzled astonishment. "Why?"

"Because they see through them," said Eve, yawning.

I laughed. Eve, catching it, suddenly interrupted her yawn.

"What amuses you?" she demanded.

"If you don't know," I replied, "it wouldn't do any good to tell you. But I think you do know."

"Well, anyway," said Eve a little peevishly, "she's obvious. And obvious women like that bore me to extinction."

But Letty Lang, however obvious, didn't bore Nick. I suspected that from the beginning, and I fixed it as a certainty a few weeks later.

We were sitting alone in his study. I remember it was Thanksgiving Eve, for Eve had gone to the country club's dinner dance, attended, as usual these days, by Monty Plunkett. I sprang the question on him without preface.

"By the way, Nick, have you seen anything more of your lovely conquest?"

He looked startled.

"Lovely conquest?" he repeated, frowning. "What do you mean?"

"She's not a 'what.' I mean Letty Lang."

"Oh!" His tone indicated the depths of surprise. "Oh, yes. I—she asked me there for tea, you remember."

"Oh, yes," said I in my turn, but my tone indicated that I had forgotten Miss Lang's invitation.

"She's really such a nice little thing, you know. Sweet, pretty, and really very bright. Reminds me a lot of Eve."

"Is that so?" I asked, interested. "And does Eve, too, think there's a likeness?"

"Why—er—I don't believe Eve's followed up the acquaintance. She didn't seem to care for her. That's one thing I can't understand about women—that they so seldom see the attractiveness in other women. Miss Lang is really nice—awfully nice."

"Yes, so you said," I commented dryly.

"Now, see here, Aunt Judy—you're always such a good sport! *You're* not going to be down on her, too? Just because she's on the stage? Even if she is an actress, she's really a very——"

"Nick," I interrupted, "if you call her 'nice' another time, I'll be convinced it's not true! Which would be a pity, for on our one occasion of meeting she succeeded in impressing me that she really was. But then," I added, with intentional malice, "that may only go to prove that she's truly a competent actress."

Nick jumped up, and flung his unsmoked, expensive cigar into the fireplace.

"Can't *any* of you women have charity and a sense of justice?" he flared. "Just because this pretty little girl is on the stage—which God knows is no primrose path—you've got to jump in and add to her rotten deal by making her one with her environment! It's ghastly unfair! You have no idea what that poor girl has been through in order to reach her present position."

"Have you?" I asked.

"She's told me something of it," he admitted. "I suppose you'll say that was a sympathy play, but it wasn't. I asked."

"For Heaven's sake, Nick," I complained, with assumed innocence, "what did I say to bring out this explosion? I must be getting old and my jokes poor. Anyway, it's nothing to make such a stir about. Sit down and calm yourself."

Nick obediently sat down. But he didn't look calm. He looked suddenly so self-conscious and foolish that I was sorry for him.

But I was not sorry that he had fallen in love with an actress. For this dispensation, as I stated in the beginning of the story, I devoutly thanked God. I began, then, to think it might

be a good thing, and a few days later I knew it.

Eve and I had gone into town together to shop. These occasions were rarer with us than they had formerly been, and the buoyant frankness of our comradeship had simmered down; ever since my "meddling," Eve had punished me by treating me like an ordinary female. Only once had I ventured to mention Miss Lang, with insinuation, and on that occasion Eve's shrug had hurled my warning to the depths of negligibility.

"No such luck for the old dear!" she said. "He's steadier than the town clock."

One's conviction is as good as a fact. Eve's complacent belief served her up to that December day of shopping; nor did it hinder her from buying a particularly becoming new motor coat and bonnet, while I—suspecting the mission of these delectable, but unneeded, accessories—had carefully to shroud my disapproval. Altogether, the day was amicable, and we decided to round it off by running over to Mrs. Abbott's new apartment, hoping to catch her in.

Possibly I haven't told you about Mrs. Abbott—a colorlessly *comme-il-faut* unit of society, whose husband's sister, Edith, chanced to marry Nick's second cousin Frank. But that doesn't matter, anyway, as she has no connection with this story beyond residing, by act of Providence, precisely where she does. She lives in one of those fashionable bijou apartments just off of the avenue. It isn't a very large building, either—which makes what happened all the more strange.

Even had the hall man been attending to his duties, this story, if written, might have come to a very different climax. But he had betaken himself to one of those mysterious retreats which hall men are wont to frequent. The elevator boy was sailing his craft at some incommunicable height. So Eve

and I were allowed, for several minutes, to test our patience in the over-decorated foyer.

Eve, restlessly punching the elevator button, was peering up the shaft when the entrance door swung in to admit two people. At the sight of them, I must have gasped, for when I quickly turned to Eve, she had already faced about and was gazing toward the door.

I followed her glance back to the approaching figures. Neither the man nor the woman, moving in an engrossed, *intime* oblivion of things external, had yet noticed us.

Eve stepped forward and graciously extended her hand.

"Miss Lang—how lucky! We feared—oh, hello, Nick!—that we were going to miss you."

Nick, beyond a funny little squeak in his throat, did not speak. Miss Lang appeared composed.

"My—*dear* Mrs. Smith! And your aunt, too! What a pleasure! Come right up for tea!"

At that point the elevator's custodian, who really had brewed the trouble, decided to appear and see what further mischief he could accomplish. His devilish adeptness was speedily manifested.

Nick followed the rest of us into the car.

"Sixth floor!" he commanded, with hauteur.

"Yes, of course, Mr. Smith."

Nick did not kick the boy. He only blinked sternly at something in the roof of the car, while the rest of us gazed vacuously into the air.

I shall never forget that tea party. Of course the situation was, in essence, revolting, and I instinctively rebelled at having stumbled into it; yet it undoubtedly held my liveliest interest, and the two leading characters played their parts superbly.

Of Eve I was tremendously proud. Most onlookers would never have suspected that she hadn't intended all

along coming to tea; it was only because she was the least bit too smooth, and because she was as attentive to Miss Lang as to a man, that I realized how deeply she was stirred.

As for Miss Lang, she was almost as smooth. But then *she* had to divide her resources—she had to make the tea, which requires a degree of individual concentration.

"How many lumps?" she asked, holding the tongs steadily poised.

"None, thanks," said Eve.

Whereupon, Miss Lang, talking suavely, dropped three lumps into Eve's cup.

But poor Nick! *He* is no actor!

When, after an interminable interval, the time came to go, he longed, judging from his expression, for one of those stage devices by which one can be let down through the floor. Of course he didn't, under the circumstances, want to stay after we left, and equally unpleasant loomed the prospect of riding twenty miles in the intimate bosom of the family limousine.

With us, however, he did depart, taking leave of his hostess with as much awkwardness as Eve did with grace. But downstairs he mumbled something unintelligible about "business engagement—important. Home on the seven-forty-nine," and bolted for the subway station.

"Poor Nick!" said Eve, with a tiny giggle. "He'd like to run away to sea."

In the same breath she turned sober. She drooped down against the cushioned seat, and gazed despondently through the window.

In silence, save for the singsong of the gears under the floor of the car, we sped smoothly through the blurry darkness of the park. At short intervals the lamps flashed briefly. Vague, shadowy, moving things appeared in view, to be swallowed quickly back into the dusk. We emerged into the glare of a busy, clanging street, swarming,

it seemed, with millions of darting human beings. Then we were on the Harlem River bridge, piercing a very dream picture of light in shadow—lights above, about, below, reflecting in a thousand magic guises on the water.

All the time, I, bursting with a thousand queries, contrived to hold my tongue. I knew Eve was stirred—but was she stirred enough? It was not until we had slid into the smooth road of Pelham Parkway that she spoke:

"Aunt Judy, have you a copy of that book?"

"What book?" I asked.

"That one of Swift's—about nets and cages."

"I have," I said.

Eve turned her head away and stared out into the darkening reaches.

"Does he tell how to make them?" she asked presently.

"Nets?" I inquired ingenuously.

Eve's hand crept across the cushion, found mine, and gave it a little squeeze as she replied:

"Cages."

"Eve," I said, "if you are in earnest, you don't have to read what Swift, Beowulf, or any other of those 'old fossils' had to offer about handling men. For they were men themselves—sons of poor, foolish Adam. And you are Eve."



LOST YOUTH

I CRIED to-day at such a little thing.

I never knew

A little thing could hold so great a sting,
My dear, did you?

I went into a room where I was young

And, near the wall,

A woolly-coated little lamb was flung—
And that was all.

It would have been no awful thing to face,

Clean, in the sun;

But on its coat, like pitiful old lace,
Were cobwebs spun.

I cried to-day just for that little thing.

I never knew

A little thing could hold so great a sting,
My dear, did you?

FRANCES CAROLINE WILLEY.



SUZANNE

by

F. BERKELEY SMITH

THE village nestled in the armpit of the Norman Sea is so small that it is of no consequence. Even its name is insignificant—Le Port. There is but one store, as modest as the low stone houses of the fishermen lying about it—Monsieur Toupin's store, smelling of smoked herring and gasoline. And the gasoline, men in goggles swear, is of poor quality.

What can you expect of a hole like Le Port? Not, surely, a romance, or a tragedy of hearts? A wrench, a turn of the wrist, an insolent shriek of warning from your demon siren, and Le Port has vanished behind your automobile and out of your mind. Stop! Let us go back. You do not know, of course, that down that modest street which ends at the marsh Jean was born in a high feather bed, over the dirt floor of a fisherman's hut.

So was Suzanne—just opposite.

In the days when Jean's chubby fist was just large enough to close over the big two-sou piece that his mother gave him for his very own on the day of the village fête in August, and Suzanne had just learned to lisp, "*Bonjour, m'sieur—m'dame,*" to strangers in passing, Le Port's thoroughfare seldom if ever heard the horn of an automobile. The village was at peace. The sound dominant twice daily was the roar of the incoming sea, as it fought its way into the bay, and, at early dawn, the

cry of the sea fowl—faint in the rain, cheerful in the good sunshine, clear and full in the moonlight—as the birds circled the bay and marsh. There was good fishing beyond in the open sea. The nets seldom had time to dry, and the people were content. And those were the days when Jean and Suzanne played together.

For plaything, Jean had a battered wooden decoy duck, with a string through its bill, which he dragged about in the mud as fast as his chubby bare feet could run with it. The duck's name was Mirelle. And Suzanne had a doll—legless, like Mirelle, but with fair hair and blue eyes like her own.

Jean's eyes were brown, and his hair grew in chestnut ringlets all over his head, and when he fell down, he never cried, whereas you could hear Suzanne as far as the store, which was quite a ways. When Suzanne cried, Jean comforted her by pawing her tear-stained face affectionately. So, you see, he loved her from the very first. Even the two-sou piece his mother gave him on the day of the fête of the village he generously lavished on Suzanne, giving her far more than half of the tricolored, sticky stick of candy for which he exchanged his two sous at Monsieur Toupin's. He bought the sticky stick for Suzanne—whereas, later that very afternoon, sly little Suzanne sneaked to Monsieur Toupin's with four

sous, and, like a cannibal, devoured a whole gingerbread soldier, down to his boots, under a bush by herself.

At eighteen, Suzanne was the prettiest girl in Le Port, and worked for Monsieur Toupin as "*bonne à tout faire*" for twenty francs a month and board. That is to say, she was never idle except when asleep. She helped fat Madame Toupin in the kitchen, fed the chickens, waited at table, milked the cow, cooked, filled the lamps, and served customers in the store from early dawn until the bell in Monsieur le Curé's church struck ten, when the store closed for the night and she put up the shutters.

She was eighteen, fair-skinned, fair-haired, with mischievous blue eyes—slightly almond-shaped—strong as a man, with a figure just budding into womanhood and the complexion of a rose. The passing chauffeurs began to declare that Monsieur Toupin's gasoline had improved, and lingered in the buying, for Suzanne's smile and a sight of her pearly teeth were worth lingering for. They discussed her beauty along the road and in distant garages.

At nineteen, Jean became an orphan. At twenty he owned the *Marie-Jeanne*. She was a fishing smack, of the Norwegian type common along the Norman coast, and she carried, besides her tobacco-colored mainsail and vermilion-hued jib, a squat, tawny rag at her stern. She had been built in Courseulles for bad weather, and generally got it. Jean handled her alone, and could see Suzanne only now and then in his free hours, when the sea did not call him to work.

You would have picked him out among all the others at Le Port, this able young fisherman, whose brown eyes gleamed with courage and good nature. He possessed the energy of two men and the grit of three—a rare young sea wolf, built, like the *Marie-Jeanne*, to stand all weathers—and he worked

at his nets with a will, for his heart was happy in that great chest of his. It beat warm under his blue seaman's jersey; it beat for Suzanne, and for Suzanne alone. Its warmth came from that priceless possession we call love, and his love for Suzanne was meat and drink to Jean. So the heart that the girl he loved had given him went with him daily to sea. The memory of her kisses, too. True love never leaves one wholly alone.

So Jean sang to himself as he worked, hauling at his nets, standing soaked to the skin in the raw slap of the north-east wind; sang in that cool, low-pitched voice of his while he sorted his catch and the *Marie-Jeanne* lifted and plunged, until, his day's work done, he turned her stubby bowsprit in the smother and scudded for home. They would meet in the lane that skirted the marsh back of the village, after Suzanne had finished wiping fat Madame Toupin's evening dishes—would meet with that silent greeting, a kiss. Then he would encircle her strong waist with his arm, and, he holding her heavy, moist hand in his own, they would lose themselves in the dusk of the lane.

"Has it gone well with thee to-day?" she questioned him one night.

"*Eh bien!*" he laughed, brushing her warm cheek with his lips. "One cannot complain. They are running small, but plenty. We have nearly a louis' worth of mackerel besides."

The word "we" was common between them now. It indicated the future. They were engaged.

"That is a good ten francs saved," she murmured in his ear, with true Norman shrewdness, and sought his salt lips in the dark.

They spoke then of the illness of the Mère Fouchard's baby. The doctor had come again from Cauville. The mother, the Mère Fouchard, being drunk, it was the Vaneau girl who had taken care of it to-day. The baby had already cost

thirty francs in medicines. "He was never strong, that little rabbit," they agreed.

The lunging form of a man approached, and they drew out of the path into the rank weeds bordering the marsh. It was the Père Miron, the clam digger, staggering home drunk. He grumbled a "*Bon soir*" in passing.

"It is said that the Mère Vignon has bought a phonograph for her café," whispered Suzanne in Jean's ear. "It will be gay, eh?" she laughed. "One can dance by it?" And, getting no reply from him, she added: "That will be chic, eh?"

Jean shrugged his shoulders and made no answer.

She hummed the beginning of a polka, her feet moving in unison along the path. He quickened his step to keep abreast of her. Finally he gripped her firm, round arm.

"Suzanne!"

"*Eh bien*, what?"

"Thou art fond of dancing?"

She started in the dark.

"*Eh, voilà*, my dearest, what a question! Of course I like to dance. Who does not?"

"I," he replied firmly.

"Thou art not jealous, my big wolf?" she breathed against his cheek.

He made no reply.

"How silly thou art! Thou art like a big baby."

"Thou knowest well enough," he replied, after a moment's pause, "that it is rare that I go to the café."

"Ah, la, la! *Bien sûr*, I know, if the Mère Vignon counted on thee for her trade——"

"Besides," he went on evenly, half dropping her hand, "I do not approve of the Mère Vignon. The village would be better off without her. 'Tis she who spreads the ruin."

"She is not as bad as all that," declared Suzanne. "She works hard. One must live."

Impetuously her arms went about his strong neck, her fingers seeking the crisp curls at the nape.

"Listen, Jean. I have something to tell thee. Thou wilt not be angry? Listen, my love. It is like this—Madame Toupin is in a bad humor—I am certain if I ask her, she will refuse—Oh, I am certain—Listen! Thou wilt not refuse, Jean? Thou knowest well that I love thee."

"Go on," said he.

She forced his lips to her own, and spoke softly into them:

"It is apropos of my new waist. Yesterday I saw some blue satin. It is ravishing. The wagon passes again to-morrow. It is ten times prettier than Janette's—only it costs dear—eighteen francs—and I had to give sixteen francs to mamma only yesterday to help her with the rent—Thou art not angry, my big wolf?"

"Thou shalt have it," said he as they turned out of the silent lane up a walled alley toward Monsieur Toupin's, where he left her.

The new phonograph, he mused. Would she get to going to Madame Vignon's? There was a dull fear at his heart as he went home to his stone hut by the marsh, his sabots clacking down the now silent, deserted street; a fear that troubled him, and that, out of loyalty to the girl he loved, he was ashamed to confess to himself. Would she get to going there, he wondered, flirting, joking, laughing with the riffraff of the village, like Rose Vibert, like Janette Dubois—both of whom had once been pretty, and who now drank as easily as they lied. Suzanne had never talked to him like that before. There had been a happy-go-lucky ease about her that he did not like. She frightened him.

With more fear than jealousy, he recalled a dozen ne'er-do-wells of the village who hung around Madame Vignon's dingy little café. As long as he

could remember, Madame Vignon had sold to old and young; and some of the young were old, and most of the old hobbled about, too played out with tippling to go to sea. And there were other girls in Le Port—most of them he had gone to school with—barefooted fisher girls, girls as free and garrulous as the gulls in the bay, a wanton lot, old before their time, who swore as easily as the men; girls who gave their kisses for drink, and smacked their red lips over it. Who, indeed, was ever cold sober in Le Port, he mused. Few indeed, and these only when they had drunk their last sou. Many had sold their boats and forfeited their nets for credit. Madame Vignon owned them all.

He reached his hut, left the door ajar, for it was a mild night, lighted a tallow candle, and went to bed. Something deep down in his heart told him, as he finally fell asleep, that he was a fool to worry, that Suzanne was his own.

The following week two events happened in Le Port—the arrival of Madame Vignon's phonograph and of a barber.

Hippolyte was his name—Hippolyte Lefèvre—and they called him, from the very first day of his arrival in Le Port, "Monsieur" Hippolyte. At a distance you might have taken him for a small boy. Getting closer, so that you could distinguish his cracked and pointed patent-leather shoes, his tight check trousers, his small, watery-blue eyes, his tiny blond mustache, the same shade as his pomaded blond hair, which he wore neatly brushed in a hollow curl on the top of his small head—getting nearer, I say, you saw that he was a man. That is, he was all of twenty-six years of age, and his voice, like his laugh, was gay and mild and inoffensive. He was of that dwarfed height which the French army refuses to accept in its recruits. His manner had the obsequiousness of a valet and the

vanity of a dandy. He did not smoke. It displeased the ladies.

His full name glittered in new gilt letters on the corner opposite Monsieur Toupin's store. Above it hung the traditional brass ball with its horsehair tassel, while back of his rather pretentious little window were ranged on shelves that particular kind of merchandise which turns girls' heads; bottles of violet perfume and brilliantine, two large flasks of eau-de-Cologne, rows of celluloid back combs, and cute sticks of lip rouge. Below these there were a few shaving cups, ornamented with decalcomania monograms of imaginary clients, two nail files, and six sponges. This alluring collection was ranged resplendently behind fifteen enameled letters which, neatly glued on Monsieur Hippolyte's window, spelled:

"COIFFEUR DE PARIS."

Monsieur Hippolyte had been to Paris. It was upon an occasion when the bugle corps of his native town, Nantes, took advantage of the low rate of a Sunday excursion.

Monsieur Hippolyte's mother, a respectable *charcutière*, whose sausages were famous in Nantes, had destined him at an early age for the priesthood. His ambition, however, drew him toward the tonsorial art, and he chose Le Port as a modest beginning. He was a deft little weasel with the comb and brush, the razor and the scissors. It all seemed to come naturally to his small, pallid hands. Scarcely a week elapsed after he had opened his shop before every girl in Le Port was wearing something that resembled a Marcelle wave. He took especial pride in the manufacture of an egg shampoo—a secret of his own—and in the care of Suzanne's hair. With the magnanimity of a singing professor toward his favorite pupil, he charged her nothing, and, since his shop was directly opposite Monsieur Toupin's store, Suzanne

ran across in stolen moments to consult both Monsieur Hippolyte and his mirror.

At gray dawn one morning a brisk breeze from the southwest drove the *Marie-Jeanne* racing out of the bay. At its entrance, she rounded the low-lying breakwater of black rocks glistening like seals, tacked twice, and headed in a chop sea straight for the fishing grounds. She was a sturdy craft, strong-ribbed, short and broad of beam, with a rakish prow that took bad water easily. She seemed her old self this morning, sailing free with an easy lift. She had a knack of sailing close to the wind, and this knack was as familiar to Jean, her skipper, as the wooden sabots he wore, stuffed with straw. As he stood with his hip braced against her tiller, he felt her now and then give him a friendly nudge of warning as the strong breeze in the open sea bellied her mainsail, or the top of a wave burst over her starboard bow and spat the length of her, drenching his head and shoulders.

He had his "*chaloupe*" aboard of her to-day, a heavy, iron-ringed boom, which, when cast astern, served as a drag to his net. Jean's thoughts, as he let her have her way out to the fishing grounds, were not, however, on the *Marie-Jeanne*. The dull fear was in his heart again. He was thinking of Suzanne and of Monsieur Toupin's remonstrance the day before that she was never in the store when wanted, and generally could be found across the street, flattered and Marcelle-waved by Monsieur Hippolyte Lefèvre. There was no doubt that that gentleman, who had practically ruined Suzanne's hair, was the best waltzer in Le Port. His small feet were as nimble as his hands. Naturally he was received at Madame Vignon's café with open arms, and out of the magnanimity of his feeble nature he had consented to teach the tango free of charge.

Jean remembered, too, that the day before the shutters of the barber shop had been up and the place closed. Some one had said that Monsieur Hippolyte had gone to Paris for stock. Above the sound of the waves slapping along the smack's side, Suzanne's voice seemed to murmur in her skipper's ears:

"It will be gay, eh, to dance? Of course I like to dance. Who does not?"

So engrossed was he in his thoughts that he did not lift his head to notice a strip of leaden sky hanging low in the southwest, nor was he even conscious that the wind had veered a point or two to the west. The *Marie-Jeanne* now lifted and dipped in a puffy wind. He close-hauled her mainsail, but a quick gust from the southwest sent her careening, half burying her scuppers in the wash of the sea. It awoke him from his reverie. At that instant, as he ducked under her mainsail to tack, a white squall came thrashing out of the west—spreading, seething, sweeping upon him. A moment before he had been in sight of the fishing grounds. Now they were obliterated from view. Before he could drop his mainsail and jib, the squall was upon him.

It was no ordinary squall. It spread over a leaden sea with the bite and rapidity of acid sweeping over a metal plate. Its vicious hiss was but the preface to what sailors call a "whole gale."

The moment had arrived when able fishermen fear for their lives, when the chance of death passes from possible to probable, when to live is a question of luck. A "whole gale" strikes terror.

"*Sacré bon sang!*" exclaimed Jean, straining at the tiller, while the *Marie-Jeanne* plunged and reared in the smother.

"*Ah, mais!*" he muttered in surprise, as the wind increased and his craft staggered under the thrash and rose quivering like a horse under the lash.

"Ah, bigre, alors!" he remarked grimly, with clenched teeth. Filling his great chest with a deep breath, he pulled with all his might to keep her head to the wind.

"A jagged flash of lightning—a crackling roar—and the rain fell in torrents. Despite the downpour, the wind and sea went wild, the sky a greenish black. His jib, which, single-handed, he had not had time to reef with his mainsail when the squall struck him, now broke loose, a snapping, torn rag that flayed itself viciously. Jean lashed fast his tiller, crawled forward, and dragged the tattered jib down.

Another blinding flash, and three white-hot wires zigzagged down to the horizon. For an instant, far off to starboard, he caught sight, through the white curtain of spray and rain, of the ghostly silhouettes of three fishing boats—a glimmer in the storm. They, too, were in distress, caught with their wings up, as helpless as three butterflies struggling in the surf breaking over the shoals. Down came a stinging hail, and they disappeared from view.

In ten minutes the sea was in a fury. Already one of the butterflies, a craft from Courseulles, lay heaving with its wings flattened. Three men were clinging to her upturned hull. The *Marie-Jeanne* was already a third full of water, wallowing doggedly in the trough of the sea. Despite her skipper's strength, she had swung broadside twice, shipping the crests of the waves, and nearly capsizing.

Through this hell of wind and water the bell buoy off the Three Wolves never ceased its plaintive tolling. It was the only object in safety in that furious sea; held fast by its ten fathoms of chain, its note seemed to mock those fighting for their lives. It had been placed there by man as a warning against the shoals. It tolled now the death knell of two of the fishermen who had been clinging to the upturned hull.

The sea raced their bodies swiftly away from the wreck.

The third man was still clinging to the hull, to starboard now of the *Marie-Jeanne*—a small figure that squirmed and kicked and screamed in terror as it clung to the heaving keel.

"*Sacré bon sang!*" exclaimed Jean, as his craft plunged nearer. "It's the little Lefèvre."

As he said it, he felt the *Marie-Jeanne* settle under him, wallowing under her cargo of water. He tied the tiller with the sheet rope, shouted to Lefèvre, cast out the *chaloupe* to steady her, got down his mainsail, and bailed for his life.

Suddenly the tiller snapped loose from its lashing, striking him full in the chest. In an ordinary sea a free tiller would have shoved him rather than struck him. In the terrific sea that was running, its blow was that of a club in the hands of a murderer. It left him for a long moment groggy, in the bottom of the boat, with an agonizing pain in his chest. He drew his hand across his mouth. It was covered with blood. When he finally managed to crawl to his feet, weak as he was from pain and shock, he threw himself against the tiller and stared to starboard. Hippolyte Lefèvre still held on. Again Jean made fast the tiller with the sheet rope. Ten rods more and he was beside the upturned hull and had dragged the barber aboard.

There was only one thing possible—to run before the wind, and, if chance favored him, make the pass at Dives, some fifteen kilometers below. With Lefèvre half conscious in the bottom of the boat, and Jean himself sickened and weak from the blow of the tiller, the *Marie-Jeanne* raced on under bare poles, only a scrap of her mainsail up.

Three-quarters of an hour later, with the tide well on its ebb, the *Marie-Jeanne*, sprained and leaking, made the pass at Dives. As she reached the stone

quay, black with an anxious crowd, her skipper fainted.

There was not a village along the coast that day but held its anxious throng. They stood waiting along the dunes, or crowding the quays of the little ports, the men stern and silent, the women weeping, as women will.

Through it all Suzanne never left Monsieur Toupin's store. She worked on, scarcely opening her lips, never mentioning her lover's name—a name that was on every tongue during those anxious hours. Early in the afternoon a grizzled old sea dog, the Père Gareau, came in for a paper of snuff. Suzanne served him in silence. The old man noticed the pallor of her compressed lips, the dull flush of her cheeks, her tense nervousness.

"*Allons! Allons, ma petite!*" he ventured encouragingly, sniffing a pinch from the paper. "It's a brave lad he is. He's got a good craft under him. *Ah, ça! Oui!* There, there, my girl!" he declared between two sneezes, wiping his red nose with the sleeve of his sou'-wester. "He'll come out all right. I've been through worse a dozen times."

Suzanne, without a word, left him and went into the kitchen. Her hands were trembling. She went to the sink, washed and dried them on her apron; then, going to a corner cupboard, she lifted down a paper box, opened it, and drew forth a carefully folded piece of pale-blue satin. It was the material for the waist that he had given her. Woman that she was, a faint smile crept to the corners of her mouth—a slow smile of delight—as she smoothed the satin against her cheek for the fifth time that day, to be reassured as to its quality. She refolded the piece and placed it back in the paper box, next to three bottles of perfume that Hippolyte Lefèvre had given her before he had left ostensibly for Paris.

Since he had impressed every one in the village with the necessity and im-

portance of his voyage to Paris to replenish his tonsorial stock, no one had bothered about Monsieur Hippolyte's whereabouts. The truth was that he had by chance met that morning, at Madame Vignon's, the two fishermen of the ill-fated smack. One glass had led to another, and, on the spur of the moment, he had accepted their invitation to a morning's fishing, not without considerable squeamishness on his part, for he was as afraid of the sea as a toy terrier.

Just as the clock in Monsieur Toupin's store whanged out six rusty strokes, the rattle of a farmer's cart outside, its sudden halt, and the murmur of voices, brought Suzanne to the kitchen window. Then she rushed to the door.

She saw Hippolyte Lefèvre get down nimbly from the front seat and disappear into his shop for dry clothes. Then Jean, ghastly pale, sat up slowly in a heap of straw. A silent crowd collected around him. A fisherman got hold of his legs. As Suzanne reached him, Jean looked vaguely into her eyes.

"*Bon—bonjour, Suzanne,*" he mumbled weakly.

"*Bonjour, Jean,*" she said, scarcely conscious of her words.

He made as if to stretch forth an arm toward her, then fell back like a log in the straw in a dead faint. From the corner of his mouth trickled a little blood.

The year wore on.

Sometimes Jean sat in the sun outside his door, in the worn and bedraggled armchair the Père Carniveau had lent him. Sometimes it was the Père Carniveau who lifted the armchair in and out for him, according to the weather; sometimes it was Suzanne. Thus the hours passed toward long-looked-for moments—the reward of hours of patient waiting, for the sun to sink beyond the rank old marsh like

a ball of fire. Then came another hour of waiting in the dusk, and he knew that she was free to come to him. As he sat there, helpless, those of the village who passed stopped to chat with this poor wreck of a man whose smile, even, seemed to hurt him, frank and brave as it was. When he watched the fishing craft slip out of the bay, until the last bevy of butterflies disappeared in the haze of the distant sea, he knew them all and the strong men in them, many of whom clattered past his door in their sabots after the night's catch.

"*Eh bien*, my old one, how goes it—the little health?" they would venture.

"Like this and like that," he would reply cheerfully.

"Bah! It is nothing—it will pass—like the bad weather."

What else could they say to him? What else dared they say?

The day he was forced to sell the *Marie-Jeanne* to pay the doctor, Suzanne sat with him more than an hour—nervous, restless, answering his hoarse questions evasively while he held her warm hand in his gaunt fingers. Then the cough seized him. When the spasm ceased, and his broken chest grew easier, he gazed at her out of his hollow eyes and motioned her to go, since his voice had become barely audible. She needed little urging these days, especially when, after Monsieur Toupin's store had closed, the strident rhythm of a schottische or a polka, emanating from Madame Vignon's phonograph, awakened the silent street barred by the marsh.

It was the hour, too, when Monsieur Hippolyte, who, as I have said, was by far the best dancer in Le Port, put up his shutters, donned a high collar and a red tie, spanned his fancy waistcoat between the top pockets with a rolled-gold watch chain, and, having laced his new patent-leather shoes, waited for her in the dusk of the lane back of the village. Any dog with half a nose could

have found Monsieur Hippolyte in the dark by the scent of patchouli.

When the strident measure of a polka announced that the varnished box, with its pink tin horn, was in full swing at Madame Vignon's, they would leave the lane for the café by way of an alley, so as to avoid passing Jean's door.

There was no need for Suzanne to confess to Jean the truth. The whole village knew it. Monsieur le Curé and the mayor of Le Port had been duly informed, and the banns published. The two rooms over Monsieur Hippolyte's shop had undergone a transformation in bird's-egg-blue wall paper and light-blue paint, with chocolate-colored trimmings. A new suspension lamp hung over the new oilcloth table cover in the dining room, whose mantelpiece was resplendent with two ladies in bronze, depicting "Spring" and "Summer" as sentinels to a brass clock with nickeled Cupids.

Then a miracle happened—Jean grew better. The wound in his chest began to heal. The Père Carniveau no longer lifted the armchair in and out for him; Jean did it himself. Though still weak, he was conscious of growing stronger daily. He "must go slow," the doctor said, but the danger was passed. An iron constitution had saved him.

Though the wedding had been set for ten o'clock one June morning, it was nearly half past ten before the bridal procession started toward the mayor's for the civil ceremony preceding that at the church. A dozen fishermen, as is the custom in Le Port, were in waiting to salute the bride and groom with volley after volley from shotguns fired into empty barrels, as the bridal procession started to make the tour of the village on their way to the mayor's. Madame Vignon had done a thriving trade this morning. Le Port was en fête under sparkling sunshine and a sky as blue as Suzanne's eyes.

"*Vive les mariés!*" they cried, amid

deafening blasts from the shotguns.
"Vive les mariés!"

On the bridal procession came, down the street that led to the marsh, past Monsieur Toupin's, past the new home, led by a girl in white with a tulle veil and a wax wreath of orange blossoms in her Marcelle-waved hair; a strapping girl, with the complexion of a rose. And beside her, her white-gloved hand nestled in his arm, walked Hippolyte Lefèvre in a frock coat and a new silk hat. Not a word escaped Jean as he sat in the sun in the worn armchair. His eyes, as she approached, were riveted upon Suzanne. His breath came quick. His face was ashen. As she passed him, she raised her eyes to him and smiled.

Jean uncovered his head, and the hand that held his sailor's cap trembled.

"*Bonjour, Jean,*" she said.

He had survived the blow of the tiler; it had been nothing in comparison to this.

"*Bonjour, Suzanne,*" he replied respectfully as she passed.

The laughing cortège following wavered dimly before his eyes. He felt chill and numb, like a man who had been stabbed. Suddenly the cortège stopped. Something had occurred that made him grip the arms of his chair. With an effort that cost him a spasm of pain, he got slowly to his feet. In the middle of an excited group he saw Suzanne reel as if about to fall.

"*Sacrebleu!*" croaked a toothless old woman. "She is ill!"

"She's mad!" shrilled Madame Vign-

on, over the broad shoulder of the blacksmith's wife, as Suzanne collected all her courage and boldly turned back, pushing her way through the gesticulating throng, her hands clenched to steady them, her lips set in desperate determination. Hippolyte followed her, flushed to the roots of his pomaded hair with confusion, vainly plying her with frantic questions. Twice he tried to detain her by putting a weak arm about her strong waist, but she elbowed him aside and forced her way blindly on through the crowd, her face now buried in her hands—fought her way back to the man braced against his chair.

"Jean! Oh, Jean!" she sobbed, and sank on her knees before him. "Jean—save me! I love thee! I cannot marry him. Jean, I love thee! I love thee!"

He slipped back in his chair, his arms about her, deaf to the roar of mingled derision and approval from the crowd. Some cursed; others clapped their hands, shouting: "Bravo!"

"It is well done—that!" declared the Mère Dubois, the mother of Janette.

The skinny claw of the Mère Vibert shot out and slapped her wrinkled face. A few yards farther on a dozen friends were following the blubbing Hippolyte. They disappeared with him into his shop and slammed the door shut. The tall, black figure of Monsieur le Curé could be seen talking calmly to the few stragglers who remained.

"What God hath willed," rang out his solemn voice down the modest street, "let no man try to put asunder."





THE DAUGHTER PAYS MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

To save her mother and her younger brother and sister from destitution, Virginia Mynors, a girl of twenty, consents to marry Osbert Gaunt, of whom she knows nothing except that he was once engaged to her mother. She and Gaunt have never met, and have seen each other but once—in a London art gallery, which she visited with some friends of her more prosperous days, Gerald Rosenberg and his sister. Gerald is in love with her, and would marry her but for his father's disapproval. When Virginia learns that the gloomy-looking man who followed her about so strangely was Osbert Gaunt, and that he wishes to marry her, she concludes that it is because of her resemblance to her mother. It is, indeed, because of that, but for another reason than Virginia supposes. Gaunt's whole life has been embittered as a result of his jilting by Mrs. Mynors, a heartless, selfish flirt, in favor of a richer man. He believes Virginia to be the same vampire type of woman, and takes a savage joy in the thought of bullying her. Mrs. Mynors knows his motive, but though she is wild with chagrin at finding her old lover no longer under her spell, and would gladly thwart him, fear of poverty restrains her, and she lets Virginia make the sacrifice. Gaunt agrees to support the family, educate Tony, the boy, and pay for a new treatment for the little girl, Pansy, who is lame. The marriage is hastily concluded, and Gaunt takes his wife directly to his country home, Omberleigh, where that same evening he harshly breaks the truth to her. Though bewildered by her gentle, dignified acceptance of the situation, he concludes that she is only acting, and continues to treat her as if she were the mercenary, selfish girl he believes her to be. Thinking to confirm that belief, he opens several of her letters, and is overwhelmed by their revelation of her sweetness and honesty. In an agony of remorse, he flies to the other extreme, and falls deeply in love with his wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT was upon the following day that Doctor Dymock asked to see Gaunt, and with all the diplomacy that he could muster begged him to keep away from his wife entirely for a fortnight at least.

"I do not like her state of evident mental tension," he said. "She seems strung up to an unnatural pitch, and in these cases we always find that the society of those who are nearest and dearest has a disturbing effect. The whole structure of your future happi-

ness probably depends upon your patience and forbearance now. There are many girls who can, so to speak, take marriage in their stride, without its making any perceptible difference. She's not like that. She's acutely sensitive—just now abnormally so; and, unfortunately for you, she was at the time of her marriage seriously out of health.

"At present she is not what is unscientifically known as hysterical, but she might become so as the result of quite a small error of judgment on our part.

I shall make it clear to her that you are keeping away entirely out of consideration for her—and I'll also speak to your servants, who have been with you long and are trustworthy. Nobody else need know anything of the matter. You could hardly have a better companion for her than Mrs. Ferris, who has no nerves, who is not observant, and who will keep her amused without wanting to pry into her feelings."

Gaunt was lighting a cigar, sheltering the match from the wind with his hand, so that his expression revealed nothing.

"I'll do anything on earth that you advise," he replied, after a minute. "I suppose you are right. I do blunder. I find myself blundering. The fact is, I know nothing of women. This was very sudden with me, and I—I haven't gone the right way to work. I need hardly say that her happiness is the first consideration."

"If you feel that, I'm sure it will all come right," Dymock told him hopefully. "Your forbearance is bound to impress her. I'll see that it does impress her. In two or three weeks she'll be a different creature. Even then you must let her come along at her own pace. She wants delicate handling." As Gaunt said nothing, but shrugged his shoulders as if he felt himself incapable of the requisite diplomacy, the other went on: "Of course, I guess at the circumstances. You fell abruptly in love—you found the lady in a position from which you felt she must be instantly rescued. Your marriage came, as it were, too early in the program. Well, you must do what a good many other men have done successfully—begin your wooing after you are wed. I seem to have a pretty cool cheek, talking to you like this—what?"

"Circumstances justify you, I think," replied Gaunt. He did not speak as if he were offended, but his voice did not invite further admonition.

Dymock rose to go, and for the first

time in his life found himself thinking sympathetically of Gaunt of Omberleigh. How was this affair going to pan out, he wondered.

He turned on the doorstep.

"She's anxious about her little sister, I gather," said he.

"The child has been taken to London to undergo treatment," replied Gaunt. "Is she not doing well? I had not heard that."

"Oh, she was moved to London only yesterday, so nothing can be known yet. However, Mrs. Gaunt is anxious."

"Do you mean that she wants to be there? Ought one to let her go?" asked Gaunt, startled.

"On no account. She's quite unfit for such exertion. Only, if it can be done, arrange that she gets good news, that nobody writes disquieting bulletins."

"I'll see to that," replied Gaunt, with emphasis, as the doctor rode off.

This was a chance to send a line to his mother-in-law—a chance of which he would take the fullest advantage. He would write also to the head of the nursing home where Pansy was installed, directing that his wife should be as much reassured as was consistent with the facts.

During the days that followed, Gaunt found himself the object of a universal sympathy and kindness. Doctor Dymock had dropped hints, among those of his patients best famed for gossiping, as to the chivalrous nature of the misogynist's marriage. It seemed that he had found a fair maiden languishing in bondage, and had endowed her with the half of his kingdom. Unfortunately she had suffered so severely as to undermine her health, and the first task for the newly made husband was to have her properly nursed and fed.

This, of course, explained why he had not taken her upon a wedding tour. That would doubtless come later, when she was strong enough to enjoy it. Ru-

mors of her beauty and of Gaunt's devotion were rife.

When he drove into the market town, he found people cordial after a wholly new fashion.

Meanwhile, he himself was changing to an extent of which he was far from being aware. The heart and head that for so many years had been wholly occupied with self were now filled exclusively with the image of another. As the days passed, and he held rigidly to his promise to Doctor Dymock, his thoughts were more and more completely given up to the question of Virginia's future health and happiness. Some deep-lying reserve had prevented his admitting to the doctor that, except for the ceremony, she was not as yet his wife. Yet he had this fact in reserve, as perhaps his only chance to restore to her her freedom.

He recognized that, as soon as she was strong enough, he and she must come to an understanding. He must show her his change of heart, and, if it could be done, he must give her her liberty. She would have to know that he was no longer her jailer, but her devotee.

He could see now how for all these years he had been yielding himself prisoner to the devil, and how his apprenticeship had culminated in the perpetration of a devilish deed. Night and day he was haunted by the memory of Virginia tearing his jewels from her fingers, wringing her bare hands, and crying that she was not clean.

These new thoughts of pity and regret and unavailing tenderness began to touch the lines of his mouth, to alter the expression of his eyes. He no longer went about scowling. He was seeing the world through a new medium.

It was terrible to be able to do nothing. Virginia's vehement repudiation of gifts from him left him helpless. He dared not even send up flowers in

his own name. He had to be content with seeking out the finest plants in the conservatory, the best blooms of the garden, and giving them to Grover. Carnations seemed to be in favor, and he sent to Derby for fine specimens. One day, in the innocence of her heart, Grover revealed the fact to the patient, who was inhaling with satisfaction the spicy perfume of some particularly fine ones. Virginia said nothing at the time, but about half an hour after she remarked that her head ached and that she thought the smell of the flowers was too strong. She sent them downstairs and said she would have no more carnations.

Gaunt, when he found the whole array on the table in the hall, asked the reason, and was told that Mrs. Gaunt seemed to have turned against them. Intent upon knowing the worst, he said:

"Oh, you should have told her that I sent for them expressly."

"Just what I did tell her, sir," replied Grover at once.

He himself was startled by the pain this trifling incident caused him. He went out of doors and walked for hours, trying to escape from it. He found Hugh Caunter and passed the rest of the day with him. The young agent, or bailiff, as the old-fashioned folk called him, was struck by the softening of his master's whole disposition. Anxiety and remorse did not make Gaunt irritable. He became quiet, with a hopeless kind of passive unhappiness that seemed to feel itself irremediable. Only now and then did he break out into sudden spasms of rage, which, in the opinion of his household, were most excusable and infinitely preferable to his former continual surliness.

He was more approachable these days. Each morning he waited for the doctor and walked with him down the avenue, listening to the latest bulletin. When he came in, Grover usually con-

trived to be about, to pass on to him any details of interest.

"Better news from London this morning, sir. Yes, it has sent up Mrs. Gaunt's spirits something wonderful. Gave each of the little cats a new ribbon, she has. Yes, she has give them strange names, that she has. 'Cosmo' and 'Damian' she calls 'em; and when I asked why such outlandish names, she laughs and says that they were doctors—great men, kind to the poor—and that she loves doctors because they are going to make her little sister well.

"Fairly wrapped up in that little girl she is, sir. I fear to think what the consequences would be if anything was to go wrong with the child. Has her picture there on the table beside her bed, with fresh flowers in front of it every day. And the boy, too—a handsome young gentleman, if you like! He'll enjoy spending his holidays here, won't he, sir? Brought up to a country life and a big place he was, and now they have to send him to a day school because they lost all their money. A sad story, sir, and I think you saved her only just in time. She was about broke down with the burdens she had to carry. But she's picking up her strength wonderfully nice. She'll soon be about again, for I'm certain she's as healthy a young lady as ever stepped. And as to her mind being set upon her brother and sister, that's just because she's one of them that must love, you know, sir. Wait till she has one of her own, and then you'll see!"

With which bold allusion Grover nodded and smiled herself away into the back regions with the tray she carried, leaving Gaunt very stiff and erect, gazing out of the open door down the dim, shaded avenue with eyes that glowed in a passion of regret and the color dark under his tanned face.

Grover herself wondered how she dared to chatter in this way to him. She had hardly opened her lips to him

before during her seven years' service in his house, except for the conventional words she had been obliged to speak. To-day the silence in which he heard her had lacked any audible sign of encouragement, yet it had encouraged. It had been the silence that eagerly awaits—that longs for more.

Cosmo and Damian! Surely the set lips under the heavy mustache were curving into an unwilling smile. How young it was—how freakish! How strangely he relished it! To have a creature like that always about him!

If he had only known!

Definitely he had rendered his own happiness impossible.

For his mind had begun to reach out, to curl itself about the idea of a new, strange happiness, subtle and flooding—a happiness that must spring from this single-hearted, loving, exquisite child whom he had imprisoned in his gloomy fortress.

He wandered aimlessly into his study, sat down at his writing table, rested his elbows upon it, his chin on his hands, and stared out upon the garden without moving, for nearly an hour.

Virginia's first visit to Perley Hatch gave her food for much reflection.

They motored there upon a fine, sultry afternoon, and the chauffeur and his mistress made a "chair" with their locked hands, to carry the invalid from the car across the grass to where a long chair had been spread for her in the shade.

Tom and Bill were produced from somewhere in the grounds, with more or less grimy faces and shabby overalls, but very healthy and vivacious manners. They quickly made friends with Mrs. Gaunt, divining a sympathetic spirit from the first. The baby, a damsel of about twelve months, being still largely in her nurse's hands, was cleaner and more amenable, but just as

hilarious. The two boys were both frankly ugly, but the girl had taken after her somewhat showy father and was a handsome child, of whom her mother was justly proud. She danced upon Virgie's lap, stroked her face, and tried earnestly to feed her with the soppy remnants of a biscuit, which was her own idea of the greatest civility possible to offer.

Virgie, gifted with an innate understanding of babyhood, was delighted with these amenities. She enjoyed her visit thoroughly, and was startled when a stable clock struck six times.

"Six o'clock! Oh, Mrs. Ferris, it can't be!" she cried in consternation.

"Oh, I dare say that's a bit fast," replied Joey comfortably. "Anyhow, here comes Percy, so you must just wait five minutes and make friends with him."

Mr. Ferris, with every sign of animation and surprise, was advancing across the grass.

"Why, Jo, you never told me that you expected Mrs. Gaunt to tea! This is an unlooked-for pleasure."

He shook hands with effusion, and Virgie felt repugnance in every nerve. The man's voice, his manner, even his good looks, were obviously second rate. He sat down and began to make himself agreeable—or so he thought—by talk of the emptiest and glances of the most eloquent. Almost everything he said was a scarcely veiled compliment. Joey had risen, and was helping nurse to remove the family, which was not inclined to part from the new friend who knew so much about steam engines and the other prime interests of life. Ferris had ten minutes' talk with the new beauty, and flattered himself that he made the most of his opportunity.

His fawning turned Virginia almost sick. From her heart she pitied Joey. But that young person was apparently well satisfied with her lot and quite im-

pervious to the fact that her husband was a bouncer.

As soon as she came back to the tea table, Virgie insisted that she must go; the doctor would not approve of her being out so many hours, even though she had rested all the time and been so happy and well amused. Then at once Ferris offered to carry her to the car, and hardly waited for permission before taking her up in his arms and at once seizing the chance to whisper something to the effect that Gaunt was, in his opinion, more to be envied than any man under the sun.

"What! To have his wife fall ill when he had been but two days married? I don't fancy he would agree with you," replied Mrs. Gaunt, in a voice so frigid that it pierced even Ferris' hide and made him say to himself that he must put the brake on—had been going perhaps a bit too fast.

When he had deposited what he alluded to as his "fair burden" in her place, Virgie was almost ready to think that Gaunt's own arms were preferable. He at least took no unfair advantage of proximity. Joey took the steering wheel, and Ferris, after starting the engine for her, actually suggested that he should get in with Mrs. Gaunt. To Virginia's untold relief, Joey declared that Mrs. Gaunt was an invalid and already overtired. To her dismay, the man seemed inclined to persist, and the matter was finally settled by Joey's giving up the driver's seat to him and herself getting into the tonneau with Virgie.

"He doesn't mean to bore people, but he certainly would have bored you all the way home with the story of his treasure cave," she remarked, as they drove off.

"His treasure cave?"

"Yes. He thinks he has made a discovery. You know, part of our land includes the valley they call Branterdale. I expect Mr. Gaunt has told you

that all this part of Derbyshire is limestone rock, and it's honeycombed with caves. We didn't know we had any on our land, but the other day—that is, I should say, last season—when we were huntin', the fox ran across the river and disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him. It was a narrow bit of the stream between rocks—the bit that the guidebooks tell you is like Dovedale in miniature. Of course they all hunted and poked about, but they didn't find so much as a rabbit burrow.

"However, the thing worked in Percy's mind, and he went over afterward on the quiet with the huntsman. This man, Gibbs, is a clever fellow, and he said the fox ran up the side of the rocky wall quite a long way—he saw the waving of the briers as he ran—and that the seekers had looked much too low down. So Percy let him down on a rope from the top—it's a sort of little cliff, you know, too steep for a man to climb down just there—and they found the cave mouth under a great growth of blackberry bushes and fern."

"Oh, how exciting!"

"Yes, it was. The entrance was so small they had to chip the rock to make it big enough for them to crawl in, and it was narrow when they got inside—like a mere slit in the ground. But soon it widened out, and then came a low tunnel, and it went downward; and after that they came out into a huge cave with pillars of stalactite."

"It must have made quite an excitement."

"It was a bally nuisance," was Joey's elegant response. "The papers got hold of it, and before you could say 'knife,' all the geologists in the kingdom wanted to come hunting for bones. Well, you see, we had to let them in; we couldn't very well keep them out. They grubbed and grubbed, but they didn't get much, because they say at no time could the entrance have been big enough to ad-

mit a large animal. Percy went with them and watched them when they grubbed, to make sure that they didn't take anything away without leave or keep any finds dark. And one day he found something that they were not looking for."

"Oh, what was that?"

"A pocket of lead. Quite a big one. You know this county used to be mined for lead. The Speedwell Cavern was really a mine at first. So he said nothing to anybody, but he got hold of an expert who thought it quite promising; and now he wants to find people to subscribe capital and work the lead. Wouldn't it be splendid if he found some?"

"It would, indeed."

"You see, the land has belonged to my forefathers ever since the fourteenth century," said Joey. "Nobody has touched it—that bit of the river bank has never been used for anything. If we should strike it rich, it wouldn't be so very surprising."

"You'll have to come and see the cave as soon as you're well enough to walk, Mrs. Gaunt," said Ferris, turning around with a smile that he himself thought charming enough to melt the most stony-hearted beauty.

CHAPTER XVII.

Joey was in her garden next morning, tying up dahlias, whose heads, heavy with bloom, were beginning to droop, when she looked up at sight of the doctor crossing the lawn.

"Hello!" she said cheerfully, pushing back her untidy hair from her red, hot face. "How are you? Been to Omberleigh? Does she want to change the time of her drive?"

"She sent no message," he replied, when he had shaken hands. "I've come to see you 'on my own,' as I suppose you would put it. I want to say something to you."

"Cough it up," said Joey, speaking lightly enough, but with a change of expression—a dawning of apprehension in her little, unexpressive eyes, which the doctor knew and was always sorry to see.

"Nothing serious," he told her in a hurry. "Don't jump so to conclusions, Joey. This is merely medical orders. You must keep Ferris away when you're in charge of Mrs. Gaunt, please."

Joey stooped over the garden bed to pick up her hank of bass and bundle of sticks. When she arose, her face was even redder.

"Well," she said, "it isn't easy to tell Percy to keep out of his own car."

The doctor looked at her with eyes of friendly pity and sympathy. He had known her from childhood, and had brought her three children into the world. He saw more of the workings of the household at Perley Hatch than anybody else in the neighborhood.

"I know it isn't," he answered, "but if it can't be done, say so, and Mrs. Gaunt must give up her tours with you. I may say that I suggested them at first not for her sake only. I thought a friend of your own sex, within reach, would be such a happy chance for you."

Joey turned and strolled at his side toward a garden seat. They sat down, she with her habitual inelegance, her legs wide apart, her thick garden boots firmly planted on the gravel.

"I like her," she burst out, with energy. "I like her to rights. She's got no nonsense about her—you should have seen her with the kiddies yesterday! I should hate to lose her. But what harm can poor old Percy do her? Of course he's in love with her, but so he is with every pretty woman he sees. And it's such a good thing——"

She broke off there, her thick mouth quivering. The doctor in his compassion understood as well as if she had finished the sentence. The thought in her mind was: "It's such a good thing

for him to be interested in a woman of our own class, where no harm can come of it, rather than in the daughter of the publican in Buxton, in whose bar he has spent half the day for the past month."

"Mrs. Gaunt is quite an invalid, Joey," Dymock told her gently. "It disturbs her to be introduced to strangers. Her own husband is behaving like a trump, and you must see quite well that I'm not going to let your husband step in and spoil things. She's got to be kept perfectly quiet, and if you can do that, you may be with her. If not—if you can't guarantee to keep off Ferris—why, the motor drives must stop. Gaunt is getting a car for her, but there will be some delay."

Joey sat still, saying nothing, gazing straight before her, and Dymock waited with perfect patience.

"I thought," she began slowly, "when Gaunt got married, what a difference it might make to me, supposing she was somebody I could cotton to. If he was more approachable—not such a disagreeable chap—Percy would have somewhere to go—somebody to speak to about his cave and his mining scheme. You know all Percy wants is something to do, something to fill up his mind. Old Percy's all right, isn't he, doctor? Only he gets bored. He's awfully struck with Mrs. Gaunt; and, you see, like everybody else, I've tried to grind my own ax instead of thinking only about her."

"Joey, you're a trump," replied the doctor heartily. "I see your point of view, and there's nothing against it except that you must wait a few days—say a few weeks—before starting in. You may tell Percy that he must lie low or he'll spoil his own chance with Gaunt. If that gentleman heard that Ferris had been trying to make a running with madame, he'd send the lead mine to blazes. Can you get that into Ferris' head?"

"Yes," she replied, more hopefully, "I think I could. He must hold off a bit for the present. I can say you said so—shove it all on you, can't I, doctor?"

"Most certainly. Doctor's orders. Ferris is, of course, quite free to say that he can't spare his car for Mrs. Gaunt. But if he lends it, he must, for the present, stand out. I hope you can manage this, young woman, because I think it much better for Mrs. Gaunt to have your society than to go out quite alone. If you can arrange this, I'll do my little best to say a word to Gaunt about the Branterdale mine. His support would be the making of the scheme, for, whatever his failings as a society man, nobody is more universally trusted and respected than he."

"I know. I'm pretty sure I can keep Percy off, at least for a bit," Joey assured him. "As soon as she's better, Mrs. Gaunt will like to have him about. He's such a taking chap, isn't he?"

"Handsome as paint," replied the doctor, smiling somewhat awry under his mustache. He could not tell her that the style which was fatal to the Buxton barmaid inspired in Virginia only an impatient disgust. "By the bye—I needn't give you the hint to tell Mrs. Gaunt nothing of my visit, nor to let her know that I have said a word? To put it shortly, you mustn't apologize. Don't say a word about Ferris, good or bad. Simply arrange that he doesn't appear again."

She promised. They strolled together to the gate, where his horse waited, and parted with cordiality. Poor old Joey!

In ten days, Virginia was allowed to put her feet to the ground, and the following day, which was Sunday, she elected to go to church. Doctor Dymock told her that it would do her good, but that, if she went, she must put up with her husband's company during service. It would be humiliat-

ing him too deeply to ask him to allow her to appear for the first time in public without him. Somewhat eloquently, the doctor put before her the conduct of Gaunt—his wonderful self-denial. She listened with drooping lids and said nothing. In her heart she wondered what the speaker would say if she were to look up and say straight out: "He does not love me; he hates me. He's waiting for me to be well in order that he may persecute me."

No doubt the doctor would call it hysterical raving.

When he was gone, she fell to wondering what form Gaunt's cruelty was likely to take when she should be strong enough to submit to it. She dared look forward only to the immediate future. If she tried to go beyond—to face the prospect of a whole lifetime of captivity under the jailership of this extraordinary man—she found her brain reeling. There was another subject that preoccupied her mind at this time; otherwise her speculations might have traveled farther. The question of Pansy's cure was the one thing of which she thought night and day. The accounts which she regularly received were cheerful, but not what she had hoped. They were vague, disappointing. The doctor thought that with patience they would see some real improvement—some improvement, when she hoped for a complete cure!—there had been distinctly less temperature during the past twenty-four hours. But why was there temperature at all? Was the new treatment setting up a temperature? She knew enough of nursing and sickness to understand that these reports were by no means wholly satisfactory.

And now that Pansy was too ill to write herself, what a blank there was! Mamma was so different! She couldn't tell the things one wanted to know. Day by day, since Gaunt had given her money, Virgie had sent parcels to the

nursing home that held her treasure—fruit, jelly, pictures, flowers, books, anything love could suggest. Yet she hardly knew whether they were received, or, if so, whether they gave pleasure.

This dearth of what she called "real news" gave her a good deal of anxiety, though Grover usually contrived to reassure her and to hold up a glorious picture of what the dear little lady would say when she was allowed to write herself.

On Sunday morning, Virginia was up and dressed by church time, and walked downstairs and along the hall down to the waiting carriage and pair. Gaunt was nowhere to be seen, and she drove to Manton, the village in which scattered parish Omberleigh was situated, escorted only by Grover.

At the church door, her husband was awaiting her, having apparently traversed the two miles on foot. He timed his appearance to coincide with hers, so that it would look as if they had arrived together. It was almost a fortnight since she had set eyes upon him, and the sight of him brought a rush of scarlet to her cheeks and a trembling to her limbs.

He tried to look as if everything were normal, as if he had driven over with her, after breakfasting with her as usual. He seemed paler than in her memory of him, but displayed no emotion of any kind.

Virginia was looking unusually pretty. Grover, when she had finally adjusted the charming hat, had remarked that it was not often they had anything like that to look at in Manton church of a Sunday morning. Certainly the lately married pair were the cynosure of every eye as they took their places in the old oak seat appropriated to Omberleigh.

Gaunt had no time to feel self-conscious, so anxious was he as to how his wife would stand the ordeal of sit-

ting beside him for so long. He tried, however, not to increase her nervousness by seeming aware of it. He appeared immersed in his prayer book and hymnal, singing the tenor part in the hymns very correctly.

The church organ was, in fact, his gift, though this his wife did not know. The service was extremely simple and not lengthy. She got through it quite well, feeling, after the first ten minutes, a sense of relief and peace for which she could not account. She told herself that it was the grace of God, and that if she could sit so calmly at her captor's side without a tremor, it showed that strength would be given her to endure his uttermost unkindness patiently.

He stepped out of the seat at the end of the service, and waited for her to follow, quite quietly and not officiously. His manner was, indeed, so natural that a keen observer would have suspected that naturalness to be assumed. At her side, he walked down the broad, central passage, and out at the south porch.

He had held all his neighbors so rigorously at bay for years past that very few had ventured to await the appearance of the bridal couple. But one elderly lady, of shapeless bulk, with her bonnet askew, waiting beside a big motor and escorted by a large and fine old gentleman, stepped forward.

"Well, Osbert Gaunt, you must allow me to shake hands, and to ask you to make me known to your lovely young wife," said she kindly.

Gaunt did not look pleased, but he made the necessary introduction. The old pair were Lord and Lady St. Aukmund.

"I hope you will come and see my wife before long, when we are a bit more settled down," he volunteered.

"My dear boy, I should think this is the best day's work you ever did in all your life!" cried the old countess, holding Virgie's hand most cordially.

"And she is Bernard Mynors' daughter! Oh, yes, my dear, all the county knows who you were! All the county is talking about you. But nobody will be surprised at the miracle when they see you. As for him, he is the most savage, the most *farouche*, creature that ever was made—or was until he saw you, for you have altered him already, my dear. I knew him when he was a little mite in velvet suits, and I never thought he would turn out as he did. But you've come to the rescue just in time. Put ceremony on one side and bring him to dine with us at the Chase, just *en famille*, one day this week, won't you?"

Gaunt was obliged to explain that his wife was a convalescent, and that any evening engagement was at present out of the question for her. He hoped that it would be different soon.

Lady St. Aukmund showed herself pertinacious and asked more questions than he liked, but he managed to parry them all, and she got into her motor at last, all compliments and hospitality.

He waited until the great folks were off, and then he put Virgie into the carriage at once. As he arranged the dust rug carefully about her feet, Virginia was struck for the first time with a sort of compunction. Her husband, for whatever motive, was certainly carrying out the doctor's orders loyally. She was touched with shame that he must walk home because she was occupying his carriage. Leaning forward impetuously, she said:

"I hope you will drive home. I hope you won't walk because of—me."

"Thanks. I prefer it."

He stepped back, gave the order, and she was driven away. He stood there in the road, his brows knit, his heart in a tumult. What an ass he had been to decline that offer! He might have been seated by her now, conscious of her in every fiber; seeing her, even though not daring to look at her; breathing her,

as it were, into his being. It could have done her no harm. He might have found time for some word, some faltering sentence, that would have prepared her for his change of mind, for his entire defeat and penitence.

He set out to walk home in the dust of her chariot wheels. He would set eyes upon her no more that day unless he stood, as he often did, at the window of his study, whence he could see the canopy of her chair as she lay out upon the terrace.

He saw her no more, except from a distance, for another week. Then the doctor gave him cheering news. She was doing splendidly. He thought she might lead a normal life in a few days more if she were carefully guarded and not allowed to overdo.

"You might take her to the coast. Devon or Cornwall, perhaps," he suggested.

Gaunt said he would consider it. It was a difficult time for him to leave home, just as harvest was beginning. A month later, perhaps—

As he limped back up the avenue, when Dymock had ridden away, he thought that perhaps it might make the rupture easier if it took place elsewhere, and not at Omberleigh, where apparently the world and his wife—especially his wife—were busy with his affairs. The world and his wife had been so shut out from his own purview hitherto that he was wholly unprepared for the shock of surprise, amusement, and interest that his sudden marriage had excited. In such a sparsely populated neighborhood, he had believed that he might do what he pleased without exciting comment. He saw now, with sudden clarity, how impossible such an existence as he had planned for his unlucky wife would have been in reality. A woman so used—any woman in the world except Virginia—would have cried her wrongs from the

housetops. His persecution of her could not have been hid long.

He felt that he was looking out upon a new world of whose existence he had been as unaware as the proverbial ostrich. His vindictive malice even had its ridiculous side; he had made an egregious fool of himself.

Heavy as lead was his heart as he entered the house.

Cosmo and Damian, with their colored ribbons about their fluffy necks, were at play in the hall, while Grim, his own golden collie, sat upon a settle, her feet tucked up like a fashionable lady afraid of a mouse, uttering panting, whining protest against the reckless interlopers.

Gaunt called her, and she came down slowly and with quite evident nervousness from her elevation. Cosmo hunched his lovely gray fluffy back into an arch and spat. His tail became a bottle brush. Grim slunk apologetically by, her tail between her legs.

"Poor old girl!" said Gaunt, as he went into the dining room to lunch. "You and I are a bit superfluous in this house now, it seems."

He went out that afternoon with the object of meeting Caunter at a house some distance away, whose tenant had asked for a new thatch. For the first time in his life, he forgot what he had come out for and wandered by himself until past six o'clock, his whole mind focused upon his domestic affairs, wondering whether any readjustment were possible, and, if so, how he should set about it.

Entering the house once more, he suddenly remembered his neglected appointment, and told himself that he would go round to Caunter's house after dinner and apologize.

Slowly and heavily he went upstairs, and into his room to change. Sounds came to him, low and muffled, from the next room. At first he hardly noticed, then he crept close to the door and lis-

tened. What he heard gave him a curious sensation of heat, of hurry, of desperate sympathy, and of extraordinary vexation.

His wife was in trouble. He could hear her. The sound of sobbing, the pitiful, broken gasps of quite uncontrollable weeping, came to him, mingled with the tones, coaxing and low, with which Grover was apparently attempting consolation.

What had happened? Had she hurt herself? Had they allowed her to run into any danger? But no! He was at once aware, though how he knew it he could hardly say, that no pain of her own would draw those wild tears, that unrestrained grief, from Virginia.

Whatever it was, it must be stopped or he should go mad. He felt as if his head were on fire—as if he must go out and kill somebody. Why was it allowed that she should be made unhappy? Then he thought of himself—of his own diabolical cruelty. Could she be lamenting because she was slowly, but inexorably, growing better—because she was to be taken from the doctor's kind hands and surrendered once more to her husband's harsh ones?

The sweat stood out upon the forehead of Gaunt of Omberleigh. It seemed to him that never—even in his hot youth, even in the first days of his jilting—had he suffered such torment as this. He rushed from his room into the passage and called aloud to Grover:

"Come here—come out! I want to speak to you!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

There was silence in the room. The sound of weeping died away, as if the master's voice had forced even anguish into the hush of terror. Grover answered him at length, in sudden haste, as if anything would be better than to risk his anger. There followed a muttering and a murmuring, as if the maid

were imploring her mistress to command herself. Gaunt shook with rage and helplessness.

Then the door was softly opened, elaborately closed, and Grover, her own eyes suspiciously red, emerged and stood before him. For one moment he hoped he might have been mistaken.

"Was it you making that noise?" he asked thickly, and, as she hesitated, he added, in haste: "Give me the truth, please, Grover."

Perhaps something in his voice excited the woman's pity. At any rate, she rejected the way out that his random words had suggested. It had been on her tongue to say yes, it was she; she had conjured up toothache, a fall downstairs, a family bereavement, wondering which would sound the most convincing, and was forced to reject them all.

"It was Mrs. Gaunt," she faltered baldly.

"Well, what's the matter? Out with it! What makes her cry like that—eh?"

"She's had bad news, sir—news of her little sister. She's fair broken-hearted—it's awful to see her——"

The kind soul's voice failed, and she applied her handkerchief to her quivering mouth.

"Good heavens! The child's not dead, is she?"

"No, sir, but she's in agony and calling for her sister. They seem to think she can't live, sir—the treatment has made her worse——"

"Mrs. Gaunt's not strong enough to go to London," he broke in, for the first miserable instant conscious only that he could not part with her.

"No, sir. She said you'd say so. That's what she's crying about," replied Grover, fairly breaking down and turning away.

The man's face was white.

"Stay where you are—wait! I'm going in to see her," he muttered.

Grover made a movement, but shrank back again. It was not for her to interfere with what her master chose to do.

The opening door brought Virginia to attention. She had been lying face downward upon the sofa, which stood near the fire they always lit in the evening. With a bound she was on her feet, and when she saw him, she gave a gasp of terrified surprise; then, with extraordinary swiftness, her mood changed.

"It's you, is it?" she said, in a voice that was hardly audible, so husky was it with violent weeping. "Come and look! Come and see what you've done! Oh, indeed you have got your wish! You have made me suffer! Never in all your life can you have had to endure anything like the torment—I say the torment—that I am undergoing now!" She stood before him, defiant, tense with the force of the feeling in her, wringing her little, weak hands, clenching them over her laboring breast.

"Oh, why didn't I go on—why didn't I stay there at my post, working, starving, loving them, till I dropped? If she had to die, she could at least have had me with her. I could have been sure that all was done that could be done. She wouldn't have had to die crying for a sister who never came. Oh," she burst out, with a final effort of uncontrollable emotion, all the more distressing because it could but just be heard, "why was I ever born to know such agony as this? I thought God would let me bear it all—not her—not that little thing! Oh, Pansy, Pansy, Pansy!"

She dropped again upon her sofa, her face hidden in the cushions, trying to stifle the tearing sobs. Her husband made a gesture of despair. He came near; he would have knelt beside her, but he dared not. He was so overwhelmed with what he was feeling and the impossibility of expressing any of it that for a moment he was choked and

could not speak. When he did, the curb he was using made his voice sullen and without expression:

"Virginia, I am sorry. Let me help you. Please show me your letter, or tell me what is in it."

Something unwonted—something she had not expected—must have spoken in his repressed voice. She sat up, wiping away the blinding tears, and tried to speak to him, but failed for weeping. At last, feeling that her voice could not be controlled, she drew out a letter from the front of her frock and held it to him.

He took it, warm from its contact with her; and the thought made him for a moment dizzy, so that words and lines swam before his eyes. He read it through.

There was silence. When he had got to the end, he raised his heavy lids and looked at her. Her face was now set, almost fierce. The dovelike sweetness of her changeful eyes was gone. They showed like a stormy sea.

"You want to go?" he almost whispered.

She laughed bitterly. That she, Virginia, the martyr, could laugh like that! He reeled mentally with this fresh surprise of womanhood.

"*Want to go! I am going!*" she said deliberately, her huskiness giving almost the effect of hissing. "I've borne enough. Now I don't care what happens. I'm going to Pansy. If you try to prevent me, I'll scream and rouse the house. I'll call upon your butler to protect me. I'll say you're mad, as I believe you are! But somehow I will go to her! Then, afterward, when I come back, you may do as you like. You may cut me to pieces with a knife and I won't complain. But now I'm a rebel. Now you can't keep me. I'm not afraid of you any more."

There were a thousand things to say, each more hopeless, each more futile, than the last. He could not say them.

In profound humiliation he took what she gave him—he accepted it all. A long moment ticked past after her passionate challenge. Then he spoke humbly:

"Virginia, would it console you to go to-night?"

She staggered as if his words had struck her; then she laughed again in derision.

"To-night? Ah, but of course you are mocking!"

"As God hears me, I am not. There's an express that stops at Derby at nine o'clock. You have an hour in which to pack and eat some dinner. Grover must go with you—you'll want her when you get to London. I'll call her now." He spoke with his watch in his hand.

Virginia caught her breath. She looked at him uncertainly. Once, as a small child, during a visit to London, she had been taken by her father on a visit to the Law Courts. They had been in court when sentence had been passed upon a prisoner. She had completely forgotten the crime and what its punishment was to be; but, as she looked at her husband now, she recalled the expression of the prisoner in the dock, whose doom had just been pronounced.

"For the first time—I thank you," she muttered chokingly.

Gaunt went to the door. With his hand upon the knob, he turned back.

"Promise me that you will now control yourself," he said frigidly. "No more wild weeping. You have cried yourself hoarse."

"I promise," she said in answer, her eyes upon him; her thoughts already far away in the nursing home with Pansy.

He went out, and she heard him speaking to Grover in the passage.

An hour later, having forced herself to eat something, and having accomplished her packing, she came down into the hall, equipped for her journey.

The new motor, which had arrived only two days before, stood at the door, in charge of a chauffeur who was to stay a month and train Ransom, the coachman, to drive.

Gaunt awaited her in the hall, his hat in his hand. Her face changed.

"Don't be alarmed," he told her, coming near and speaking so low that only she could hear. "I'm coming to Derby only. There are things I must tell you, and there was no time before starting. We shall only just do it. Jump in!"

She obeyed. He briefly directed Grover to sit by the chauffeur, and they were off.

For a few minutes they sat in silence. The car slipped down the avenue, the lamplight dancing upon the pine trunks, and came out into the open road, where it crossed the moor. Then Gaunt spoke:

"Does your traveling bag lock? Have you a key?"

"Yes."

"Then take these notes."

He told her what sum he had given her, opened the packet, and made her verify it. She obeyed, almost mechanically.

"Now," he went on, "when you get to London, drive straight to the Langham Hotel. I've written it down for you on this paper. Give my name, and they'll see that you have a comfortable room, with one for Grover close by. In the morning, as soon as you are rested, telephone to Doctor Danby, at this address in Cavendish Square. Let me make a confession, Virginia. This is the man I ought to have called in at first. When I knew him, he was a young chap just through his hospital training, who came down here one summer as *locum tenens*. It was the year of my own accident. I owe it to that man that I did not lose my leg. Now he is a great specialist, at the top of his profession. When we were arranging about your little sister, I would have

mentioned him to you; but I found you so full of the idea of this new treatment, and I own that I cared so little for the child or what became of her, that I thought it best you should have your own way. But if there is any hope for her, Danby is your man.

"If you believe this, do as I say. Override etiquette—take him straight to see Pansy. If there should be difficulties—if the other lot should prove disagreeable, refer every one to me. But Danby will advise you how to proceed. You are safe with him.

"You'll probably have to move the patient, if she's strong enough to stand it. Danby's nursing homes are to be trusted. Take her where he tells you. I think you have your check book, have you not? You can write a check for any fees that are necessary. I will pay in money to the bank to meet your demand. Then you can stay at your hotel and be with your little sister as much as is practicable. Are you taking in what I say?"

"Yes, I am. I—I don't know what to answer. Thank you. You are being—so—different, I feel bewildered. I'm sorry I was so rude to you just now, upstairs; and said such things——"

The meek, hoarse voice was so pitiful that he felt tears start to his eyes.

"That's all right," he muttered hurriedly. "One thing you must promise me—that you will take care of your own health. Remember—you owe it to me to——"

He broke off. What did she owe to him but misery? She, however, accepted the situation with a simplicity that was to him frankly awful.

"I know. I'll try to do what I think you would wish. I realize that I have caused trouble and—expense already. I think you very kind to let me go like this. Please tell me—how long may I stay?"

"Virginia!" he said, and dropped his forehead on his hands.

She looked at him in dim surprise, but with a mind too full of her own trouble to conceive of his.

"How long?" she persisted gently. "A week?"

"How can I say how long?" he asked, lifting his haggard face again. "It depends upon the child. I must leave it to you. Stay as long as she needs you. I can say no more than that."

"Oh," she murmured, "you are good! I can't thank you properly. I feel so muzzy in my head with crying. But I'll do all that you tell me, just to show that I appreciate what you are doing for me. I'll find Doctor Danby, and I'll carry out all that you have put on this paper; and, of course, I'll keep accounts very carefully, so that you may know just what I spend, and you can stop it out of my next year's allowance, because it is bigger than I need."

He made no sound, but his lips set themselves in a line of pain, while his eyes hid a tender smile. How artless she was, this Virginia! How her every word let escape some pearl, some overflow from the treasure of her unselfishness! Ah, if only his brutality, his savage treatment of her, did not lie between them! If it had been simply that she had come to him without love, yet longing for tenderness and protection! This would have been the moment to take her in his arms, to infold her with sympathy and devotion that asked as yet no recompense.

She leaned back in her corner, while the car rushed easily through the country, and the yellow harvest moon came up to show to him more clearly the shimmering, pearly oval that was her face. She was pondering over his directions, and every now and then put some little question that showed how practical was her mind, how bent upon the enterprise that lay before her. At last, after a prolonged silence, she spoke unexpected words:

"I believe that being so miserable

makes me understand a little bit better—understand you, I mean—how you feel. When I think of my Pansy, I could find it in my heart to kill that wicked woman, her nurse, who let her be hurt when she was a little, helpless child. I could almost torture this doctor who has made her worse when he claimed to be able to make her better. And I seem to see how it has happened—how being miserable for so many years has made you want to hurt somebody. But the dreadful thought is that it would do no good—no good at all! If I could kill the wicked nurse and the unskillful doctor, it wouldn't make my darling one bit better! And to make me unhappy won't help you, either, even though you think it will. I can't give you back the unhappy years, the lost years. It's all no good—no good!"

"Virginia—don't!" So much was forced out of him in his pain. He could have told her that in one respect she was wrong—that it was in her power to restore to him the years that the locust had eaten—that he was at her feet, conquered, submissive. But he saw how small a fragment of her mind was really occupied with him. She was eagerly looking forward, searching the horizon for the first glimpse of the chimneys of Derby. He mattered very little to her now.

They reached the station with six minutes in hand. Gaunt had sent a man down to Manton to telegraph for a sleeping carriage and a tea basket, and they found all awaiting them.

Grover and she were duly installed in their luxurious quarters; the guard had been liberally feed to look after them. Gaunt repeated some of his directions, and ascertained that both she and Grover thoroughly understood them. He took the maid aside for a moment, into the corridor of the train, while he expressed to her, in a few terse, pointed words, how unremitting must be her care, how keen her atten-

tion. Grover's response was reassuring, if embarrassing.

"There, sir, I love her almost as well as you do yourself," she said.

The words stuck for long days afterward in the man's head. Until he heard it put thus bluntly, he had hardly known that the keen emotion which he experienced could be called by so divine a name as love. It had, then, befallen him to love a second time, with a force that made his first love seem crude and weak—mere counterfeit—

His impressions of the few final seconds were blurred. The guard went along the train, closing doors. Gaunt was shut out upon the platform. Anxious to show her gratitude, Virgie stood by the open window of her compartment, looking at him, trying to fix her mind upon him, but with a fancy filled with far other visions. The image of her little sister's face, the sound of her cries, was in her heart. She was picturing her own appeal to this new doctor, this deliverer who had been brought to her by no other hands than those of her husband. She looked down upon his hand, clenched upon the sill of the door.

"Put up the window when the train starts," he was saying. "I'm defying the doctor in letting you go like this, upon my own responsibility—and you must justify me by taking all the care of yourself that is possible. Remember—you have Grover to wait upon you, and you're to order anything and everything you want. There's no necessity for you to do anything but just sit with the child when she is well enough to wish it."

Her face lit up gloriously. She smiled softly, pityingly, at the man who could imagine a moment in which Pansy would not wish to have Virgie with her.

A whistle sounded. He started and winced. Then, gripping the door a mo-

ment, he leaned forward, his eyes burning.

"Remember," he blurted out, "you are on your honor—on your honor to come back to me. You have undertaken to return."

She stared at him in surprise as she stood a little back from the window. The train began to move.

"Of course I'm coming back," she said in astonishment. "You know I shall." For a moment she smiled, but in bitterness. "I am released on parole," she said. "I quite understand."

For a few moments after the smoothly running express had slithered out of the station, upon its way south, Virginia was held by the memory of the look upon Gaunt's face as she had passed from his sight. It was puzzling. He had behaved almost as if he meant to be kind, which was incredible. His face seemed to her to be altering, or to have altered, since she had first seen it.

Anyhow, he had let her go. Her mad outburst had borne fruit—her revolt had been entirely successful. She was off, without him, going to London, going to Pansy. Her return to bondage lay in the future, dim and misty, not worth troubling about as yet. There were other, far weightier, matters to occupy her.

Before they had traversed ten miles, she had forgotten Gaunt, almost as if he did not exist.

He, poor wretch, having made his sacrifice, stood a moment with arms tightly folded, wishing he had not been so altruistic. His eyes followed the train till it disappeared; then he turned and went haltingly out of the station, back to the empty motor. He muttered something to himself as he opened the door.

"We shall see."

"Did you speak, sir?" said the chauffeur.

"No—no! I didn't say anything. Home, of course."

"Yes, sir."

Gaunt of Omberleigh sat down in the place which his wife had lately occupied. His body was there in the motor; his heart, his mind, all that was in him, was following her upon her journey. He leaned forward, gazing upon nothing, while in his fancy he recalled the whole of the late scene between them. Could he have done anything more? Could he have let her see? But no. To do that—to utter any plea—would have deprived him of a wonderful opportunity. It was now in his power to prove her to the uttermost.

He had let her go. She had plenty of money and still more credit. She was going to her own people—to her selfish, worldly mother, to her little sister's love and devotion. It was not to be supposed that, once back in their midst, she could refrain from telling her family some part at least of what she had been made to suffer. Doubtless it would all be poured out. Every kind of influence would then be brought to bear upon her, in order to shake her allegiance. It would be pointed out to her that he was probably mad—a person whose morbid tendencies must not be encouraged. She would be told that it was her duty not to return to him. A hundred arguments would be ready to hand.

As he faced the situation, he suddenly felt that it was too hard a test that he had set her. Brave she was, single-minded he had found her, honest she seemed; but if, in face of argument, in face of influence, in face of love—if, in spite of fear, in spite of dreadful apprehension of punishment, she returned to what she still believed to be a state of slavery and subjection, of captivity and surveillance—then, indeed, she was a paragon, a pearl of

such price as he was not worthy to possess.

It was too much to hope for. She was gone, and she would never return. The scandal and the tragedy of his marriage would be in every one's mouth in a very few weeks' time.

He had let her go. Why? Because it was not in his power to hold her. Even if he had followed a certain wild, hateful impulse that had bidden him keep her, even by means of locked doors and imprisonment, he would have held but the husk of her. The lovely spirit which animated her, which was the thing he loved, would not have been there in her prison, but away with the child she adored. His success would have been sheer failure.

Whereas now, deep in his heart, not to be completely annihilated, lurked the faint hope that his present failure might possibly, by some scarcely conceivable good fortune, turn into success.

The miles flew past, unnoticed, while he sat rapt within himself. As the car came to a standstill before the dark porch of Omberleigh, he was reflecting upon the strangeness of the fact that he had once thought Virginia's resemblance to her mother so striking. Already she had almost ceased to remind him of his former bitterness. A wholly new image of her had grown up in his heart. Before it, for the last weeks, he had been burning incense. He had placed it in a sacred niche, upon a pedestal.

To-night he had taken it out. He wanted to hold it in his arms, to make it his.

What if she failed to pass the almost superhuman test that he had devised for her?

CHAPTER XIX.

As once before, when the doctor had visited her, Joey Ferris was busy in the garden, cutting off dead blooms. Her little boys busily waited on her, each

with his small barrow, in which they collected the faded flowers that she tossed upon the path and ran off with them down the long walks to the rubbish heap, puffing and blowing to announce the fact of their being goods' trains, or expresses, or light engines, as the fancy took them.

It was nearly lunch time, and Ferris was going to bring home a man who had shown signs of interest in the lead-mine scheme. As the stable clock chimed a quarter to one, the mistress of Perley Hatch straightened her back, took off her gardening gloves, rubbed her nose reflectively, and wondered whether she "ought to change."

As the doubt crossed her mind, she looked up to see some one approaching across the grass, and with a vast surprise recognized Gaunt of Omberleigh.

"Why," she cried very heartily, advancing to meet him with hand outstretched, "I *am* glad to see you! Didn't think you knew your way to this house. What's the news this morning? Better, I hope?"

"It seems to be astonishingly good. The change of treatment and my wife's presence, taken together, have worked a miracle. The child, who was dangerously ill, is making marked progress every day."

"Oh, well, that's some consolation for you, isn't it?" said Joey, her eyes full of sympathy and her voice almost tender. "I think you're just the most unselfish man I have ever heard of—letting Virgie go off like that!"

"Please, Mrs. Ferris——"

"It's no use 'please Mrs. Ferrising' me! Some men in your place would have said things. First, she herself falls ill, and then, just as your love and care have brought her round, off she goes and leaves you on the All-alone Stone. Percy has been on the point of riding over to try and persuade you to come to us for a bit of dinner, but he has been so taken up over his mine."

"You're more than kind, Mrs. Ferris. I fear I've been a most unneighborly neighbor for many years. Now I'm going to turn over a new leaf. As a preliminary, will you give me some lunch to-day? I want to talk to Ferris about his mine. Doctor Dymock was telling me something of it."

Joey was overjoyed.

"Need you ask?" she joyfully inquired. "Come to the house and wash your hands, while I tell Daniel to take your horse round. I conclude you rode over?" She fixed her guest with her shrewd, twinkling glance, and thought that he had done something to himself, she hardly knew what. Was it that he wore a new, very well-cut riding suit, with tan gaiters; and that his hair was trimmed more sprucely than usual? Or was he really younger, when you saw him closely, than he appeared from a distance? Certainly he had altered in some subtle fashion, and for the better. He did not look well, though. There were black marks under his eyes, as if he had not slept. She hardly wondered at that.

Tom and Bill came rushing up at the moment, charging with their barrows. They were wholly untroubled with shyness, and loudly announced that Tom was the Midland Express from Glasgow, and Bill a pilot engine. Gaunt stopped and gravely shook hands with each, holding the plump, earthy, moist little fingers curiously in his brown, muscular grip. Then he picked up Bill by his waist and seated him upon his shoulder.

"Now you're in the lookout—the signal box," said he. "Is the line clear?"

This was enchanting. Bill shouted to Tom to go and be the excursion, and seized Gaunt's hand, drawing back his arm to represent a lever.

"Fancy your playing with them!" said Joey, deeply gratified. "That's what Virgie did. Bill, you remember the pretty lady who came to tea and

told you about Little Runt? This is her husband, that she belongs to."

"Oh, are you?" cried the excursion train, turning right round upon the permanent way in horrifying fashion. "Tell us about Little Runt again—do!"

"I don't know that story, Bill. I'll have to get the pretty lady to tell it to me; then perhaps I can pass it on."

"Where is she?" cried Tom. "Have you got her here?"

"No, Tom. She's gone to be with her own little sister, who is ill. I dare say she tells her stories to pass the time while she has to be in bed, flat on her back."

"Flat on her back? Beastly!" said Tom.

"Why's that for?" asked his brother.

"Because her back was hurt, when she was quite a baby. She was thrown out of a motor car, and has always been ill."

"You'd better not let our baby go in the car, mummy," cried the little brother promptly, and Gaunt felt a movement of affection for the child whose feeling spoke so readily.

They moved across the grass toward the house; and suddenly Joey gave a pleased exclamation.

"Here comes Percy!" said she brightly.

Ferris was advancing, accompanied by a young man, who, though he wore a country suit, had the air of London about his hat and his boots. He was a distinguished-looking, tall fellow, and Gaunt, as he set Bill upon his feet upon the grass, knew that he had seen him before.

As the stranger drew near, their eyes met, and the same look of half recognition appeared in both faces.

Ferris' cordiality and welcome to Gaunt were somewhat flamboyant. He wrung his hand a little too often and too vehemently. Then he introduced his friend, Mr. Rosenberg.

That cleared up the mystery, as far

as Gaunt was concerned. Instantly he saw an art gallery flooded with summer sunshine—the glimmering floors, the mellow canvases, the figure of a beautiful girl bending over the inscription at the foot of a marble cupid.

To Gerald Rosenberg, memory had come without difficulty. The occasion when he had first set eyes on Gaunt had been a critical moment in his life—how critical he had hardly known at the time. The same picture was stamped upon his own brain—the picture of Virginia beginning to descend the staircase, and of his own turning of the head with a consciousness of being watched—of meeting face to face a pair of eyes, ironic, intent, challenging.

"This is our neighbor, Gaunt of Omberleigh," Ferris was jovially proclaiming. "Luckiest man in the county! Just married the most lovely girl I ever saw in my life."

Gaunt! That was the name of Virginia's husband! She had said that her future home would be Derbyshire. Was this—this man—her husband? Rosenberg grew quite pale.

"Was it you," he stammered, "you who married Miss Mynors?"

Gaunt assented. The eyes of the two men once more met.

"I saw you," said Rosenberg slowly, "at an art gallery, when I went there to meet my sister and her friend. You were in the gallery."

"I was, and I saw Miss Mynors."

Gerald felt the blood rush to his head.

"For the first time?"

Gaunt again assented mutely. He was filled with exultation. Unhappy and uncertain as he, in fact, was—insecure as he knew his tenure of his prize—at least she was his at present; at least he might claim this one triumph.

"Fell in love at first sight, and no wonder!" cried Ferris, with enthusiasm. "Isn't he the luckiest chap on

earth? I really don't think I have ever seen anybody quite as lovely as Mrs. Gaunt."

"You're right—that is the almost universal opinion. I congratulate Mr. Gaunt," said Gerald, rallying his composure.

How all the crises of our lives come upon us unaware! How little had he guessed, that day in the gallery, that, although he had a good chance then, it was to be his last. His father, in persuading him to flee temptation, had urged the probability of a future recurrence of opportunity. "She won't run away," he had said, and behold, even as he spoke, a chain of gold was being forged to bind captive the innocent girl! Gaunt was speaking to Joey.

"Great as is Virginia's beauty," Gerald heard him say, "it is the least part of her charm. It is her character that is so fine, so exceptional. She's pure gold throughout."

Young Rosenberg looked at him with a lingering gaze of hatred. Had he known in what a crucible the gold of Virginia's nature had been and was still being proved, the hate would have intensified, perhaps, to the point of sending his fingers to the husband's throat. This man had apparently been certain, where he had been doubtful. *Was Virginia as fair within as without?* Could she have wholly escaped the taint of her mother's ignoble nature? His father had thought not. In his indecision, he had let slip the treasure which another man had promptly gathered.

As they walked slowly toward the house, his mind was filled with two ideas—first, that all was over, so far as he was concerned; and second, that in the course of the next few hours he might possibly see her, whose face had haunted him ever since that fatal day in the valley of decision—the day when he had decided upon retreat.

Then he began by degrees to grasp what the others were speaking of. He learned that the sudden and dangerous illness of Pansy had called Virginia to London, and that Gaunt had allowed her to go without him. Also, he learned that she had suffered with a bad knee, and that her husband was anxious lest she should now be doing too much. He listened as in a dream, his mind slowly assimilating all these rapid happenings; and by degrees he realized that if she were in London without Gaunt, he could easily see her, if he could ascertain her address.

The conversation soon turned to the projected lead mine, in which Mr. Rosenberg, senior, had been asked by a friend in the financial world to take a director's place. The party were to meet Mr. Rosenberg's town expert and Ferris' at Branterdale Cavern that afternoon. Joey was coming, too.

She drove their guest over in the car, Percy electing to ride with Gaunt, whom he was most anxious to propitiate. On the way, it was quite easy for Gerald to ask her where in London Mrs. Gaunt was staying.

"Well, I don't exactly know," said Joey. "She went up to the Langham, but directly her mother found that out, she determined that she would go there, too. I fancy the mother's a bit of a sponge, isn't she? Anyway, Virgie thought her husband wouldn't see keeping the two of them there, so she has gone into rooms with her mother, as being less expensive, and she always writes to me from the nursing home in Queen Anne Street."

"So she writes to you?"

"Yes. When they first married, Mr. Gaunt hadn't got a motor, so ours came in handy. I took her about a bit. She's a perfect angel. Hard on him, poor chap, having to let her go like this, isn't it? You can see how he's fretting."

"Is he? He looks to me an ill-conditioned brute," said Gerald shortly.

"Oh, he's quite a good sort when you know him," replied Joey kindly.

"But as a husband for her——"

"Well, why didn't you chip in?"

"One can't always follow the dictates of the heart, Mrs. Ferris. I couldn't afford to marry for love."

"Well, of course Gaunt is much too old for her, as far as years go; but," observed Joey, with one of her flashes of intuition, "he's absurdly young in the sense of not having used up his emotions. He was jilted in his youth, so they say, and ever since has imagined that he hated women—thought himself heartbroken and shut himself up alone, until one fine day he saw her. He has all the heaped-up love of a lifetime to pour out at her feet."

"It's the way things happen in this world," Gerald answered, after a long silence.

It was late when Gaunt reached Omberleigh that evening. It seemed to him as if he had been away a week, for the reason that this was the day when he usually heard from Virgie, and if she wrote in her usual punctual way, there would be a letter lying in the bag upon the hall table when he came in.

There was. He opened the bag with hands that shook so that he was afraid Hemming might notice, and when he drew out the letter, "he pounced on it like a dog on a bone," as the servant afterward related, "and was off with it into his study before you could count two."

The scrupulously businesslike letters were little enough upon which to feed the fire of a consuming passion. The point was that, in every letter, she recognized, by implication, his hold over her. Before taking any steps, she consulted him, she awaited his permission. In a way, it was torture—she never let him forget that he had bought and paid for her; on the other hand, since she

maintained this attitude, surely she would come back to him.

She never used any form of address at the beginning of her letters. "Osbert Gaunt, Esquire," was written above, and then followed the body of the communication. She signed herself merely "Virginia," as if the second name were too horrible, or too distasteful, to write. He had never seen her full signature, since she had become his wife. He hungered to see her written acknowledgment of her wifehood, and, with this object, he had set a trap for her. He had written a check that would need her indorsement, and had sent it to her. This expedient had failed, for she had returned the check, saying that she was in no need of more money; she had enough, and more than enough.

Each of her letters contained a small statement of account, carefully balanced. The first he had received was the one that pleased him best. There was very much to tell. She had to relate her experiences—how she had gone first to see Pansy and had been horrified at the change in her; how she had determined to act without delay, and had informed the doctor over the telephone that she meant to have another opinion. He had not been pleased, but had been obliged to consent.

The doctors had met, and had differed gravely; upon which she had formally placed herself and the case in Doctor Danby's hands. Pansy had been moved that day, and from the first few hours had shown symptoms of relief.

Then had come the difficulty with her mother. This she had solved without applying to Gaunt. She had gone to her mother's rooms in Margaret Street, had found that she and Grover could both be taken in, and had moved thither accordingly. Her exact explanations made him smile and grunt, and brought a moisture to his eyes.

To this letter there had been a post-

script. Under her signature, five words had been scrawled, as if on impulse: "Thank you—oh, thank you!"

He had dwelt upon those words until he had half persuaded himself that she must have perceived something of his remorse, and wished to reassure him. The following letters from her had not, however, done anything to foster this idea. He longed to write and tell her to go back to the Langham and take her mother there—to bid her choose herself a fur motor coat and anything else she liked; but he restrained all these impulses. He meant her to come back, if at all, as she had departed—in the full persuasion of his cruelty and harshness; to come back because her crystal honesty would not allow her to break her promise even to him.

With this end in view, he forced himself to write to her as curtly as possible, signing himself merely "O. G."

The missive he now held in his hand was no exception to his wife's usual style. He read it, first with his customary feeling of disappointment and heart hunger, then with the succeeding glow of reassurance, as he reached the little account of money expended. Somehow he could read between the lines what an effort it was to her to accept his help; it was done only because Pansy mattered so infinitely more than she did—because Pansy must not suffer merely for the reason that Virginia's pride would be hurt in the process of curing her.

What he little guessed was the discomfort, of the pin-prick kind, that Virginia was then enduring.

Grover was a good sort, but she was neither young nor active, and she did object to being maid to two ladies. Moreover, her own mistress, Mrs. Gaunt, was the most considerate of her sex, but Mrs. Mynors was "quite another pair of shoes." As usually happens in such cases, the considerate party was made the victim of the maid's ill

humor, while the inconsiderate brought her mending and renovating with a smiling face and got it all done, free of charge, the while she made scornful comments upon Grover's attainments and wondered how Virgie could stand such a woman about her for a moment.

The nursing home at which Pansy was now placed was just as expensive as the one she had occupied formerly. Therefore, it was surprising to Gaunt to find that, although both Virginia and her mother were now in town—not to mention Grover—instead of Mrs. Mynors alone, the total spent in a week was less than in any of those preceding by quite a noticeable amount.

The letter of to-day was an exception in that it contained a postscript. It was apparently of the least interesting description. A small item in the accounts was marked with an asterisk, and at the foot of the page Virginia had written: "When I come back, I can explain this."

The words sent a thrill through every nerve of the man.

"When I come back!"

He leaned forward, seizing old Grim by her ears and rubbing his hands up and down her neck in the way she loved.

"When she comes back, old girl!" he whispered.

Then he broke off. His eyes had wandered around the dreary, untidy, ill-arranged den. Was it a home to which to bring such a bride as his? Was there anything he could do to improve it?

Slowly he rose and limped into the little sitting room that he had called hers. There were one or two small articles of her personal possessions left about in it. He wondered whether he could have it done by the time of her return. He distrusted his own taste profoundly. What did girls like?

He remembered the drawing-room at Perley Hatch, which the Ferrises had

recently repainted and papered. No, that was not his idea. He felt that Virginia would never like big bunches of floral decorations all over her walls.

Then he remembered the little room in which Mrs. Mynors had received him at Wayhurst. Tiny as it was, how its charm, its dainty elegance, had impressed him! He closed his eyes and recalled its aspect. Ivory paint—yes, that was all right—and walls of a warm, sunny, golden brown. How would that suit here? Acting on impulse, he rang the bell and said he wanted to speak to Mrs. Wells.

The housekeeper, when consulted, was delighted with the idea. It had apparently presented itself to the minds of the servants' hall long ago. She would send down a boy at once to telephone from Manton into Derby for a man to come over the following morning to take the order.

"The furnishing I must leave until Mrs. Gaunt returns," said Gaunt in a depressed way. "I can see that this stuff is all wrong, but I can't see what she would put in its place."

"Oh, as to that, sir, if it's a question of what Mrs. Gaunt would like—why, I can tell you that myself, and you won't have far to seek, for we've got it all in the house at this moment," was Mrs. Wells' surprising answer.

"Got it in the house?"

"In the lumber room, sir. Your great-aunts, the Misses Gaunt, turned all the old things into the lumber room, after their father died, about fifty years ago, and refurnished a great part of the house, so I'm told. There's a great many things up there, and Mrs. Gaunt, when she saw them, she went into raptures over them. Said they was as old as Adam, which I could hardly believe—"

She broke off abruptly, for Gaunt, her morose master, had laughed aloud, and the circumstance was startling.

"Adam period," he hastened to apologize. "Yes, go on, please. If you showed the lumber room to Mrs. Gaunt, why have you never mentioned it to me?"

The good woman's eyes grew very round.

"Why, sir, you was here when I came," said she. "I concluded you knew all about it. My part was only to see as the things didn't perish, for I have a kind of liking myself for all them antiquities."

Gaunt's eyes were still dancing over the Adam joke. His wandering gaze strayed to the mantel, and he realized that this was of the same period. Doubtless what made these carved walnut whatnots and armchairs look so wrong was their silent clash with the fine simplicity of the mantel molding. As his eye wandered over the faded pink wall paper, with its brown, green, and blue roses, he suddenly perceived, like a man whose eyes are newly opened, that the room was meant for panels.

"So Mrs. Gaunt liked the things?"

"Indeed, yes, sir. She said how she would like to use them. I can show you the exact pieces she picked out, sir."

"Come along," said Gaunt impetuously.

Here was a glorious idea! Here was something to fill in the blank days of waiting! Virgie should find her own room, at least, habitable; incomplete, of course, and waiting for her touch—but not impossible, as at present. It would welcome her, when she came back; when—she—came—back!

Would she come?

TO BE CONTINUED.



Jack, in Love with Daisy

FRANK LEON SMITH

HALFWAY down the program, after the main hero and heroine and the singing and funning stars have been listed, you find a young man billed, "Jack," with the explanatory line, "in love with Daisy." Jack is a nifty youth of great dancing ability who sneaks on the stage and finds Daisy there every time the big ones go to another part of the house. For some reason he doesn't hold a full-membership card, so he has to examine all the doorframes and portières to make sure no one is coming. Then he leads Daisy to the round center divan and kneels beside her and tells her it's great to be alone at last and begs for a smile and says he is only existing and the only thing that would make it worth while for him to start keeping a diary would be for her to marry him.

But she, the little fool, is thinking how swell the duke looked yesterday, and she can't hear Jack at all. Presently Jack raises his voice and says, "Moontime!" The orchestra starts up, the stage gets dark, and as soon as the spotlight has found the divan, Jack begins to sing about love in the moonlight. He puts his arm around her, and she doesn't mind a bit—in fact, she embraces him—and they get up and glide around the stage, and she helps him sing. It looks as if they were about to make a go of it. But no! The millionaire's yacht has just arrived in the

wings, with not a single case of seasickness to report. A dozen large, sleepy girls with large hats and fine clothes come ashore, meet a squad of gentle and lithe young men, and they all troop on the stage and sing. Now the lights are up, and more people keep coming, until there is a crowd. But Jack is a good sport. He keeps on singing, even though his privacy is busted up. Before he meets Daisy alone again, he loses all the ground he has gained. But at the end of the last act, they fool us. The hero clutches the heroine to him in the center of the stage, four other young men step out of the chorus and slip their arms around girls they haven't noticed before, and then Jack bursts through and hugs Daisy, who has just accepted him in the wings.

Shows are funny, anyway. It makes no difference what room or place the stage is set to represent, any actor in the cast, regardless of his social standing, can come and go, apparently as he pleases. It may be a boudoir scene, but the whole gang troops in and out as if it were a railroad station. In some ways Mrs. Townley-Peets' jewelry robbery makes me think of a show. There was a Jack-in-love-with-Daisy, and the same odd freedom of the stage, and at the end 'most everybody was paired off. I'll tell it as I heard it, and you can judge for yourself.

To begin with, it started as shows

do—with the telephone ringing. Mrs. Townley-Peets, in an evening gown, was sitting at her dressing table, fixing her hair. She was in a pet because Bessie—the Daisy of this story—who had started the job, had been too rough. Bessie was folding up some lingerie at the other end of the dressing room, which was a large alcove opening from Mrs. Peets' bedroom, where the telephone was. A diamond brooch as large around as a silver dollar lay on the dressing table. Mrs. Peets was going to use it to pin a rose of the red-red-rose variety on herself as soon as she finished with her hair.

When the phone rang, Bessie went to answer it. Then she called her mistress and returned to her task. Mrs. Peets took a long look at herself in the mirror, dropped her hairbrush, treated her faded reflection to a self-conscious smile, and swept out to the telephone. She was gone for perhaps ten minutes, and when she came back, she missed the brooch immediately. She flashed to the dressing table and disturbed everything with lightning grabs, but the brooch had disappeared.

"Doak!" she cried, sinking into a chair.

Bessie—we'll use her first name; it's much nicer—Bessie was standing with her back to Mrs. Peets. At the cry she turned, with a startled look.

"My brooch—it's gone! Where is it?" demanded Mrs. Peets, her words rushing out on one high, ugly level.

Bessie got very red.

"I don't know, Mrs. Peets, if it isn't on your table. Have you looked—It was there—" she began.

Mrs. Peets turned and made another hasty search; then glared at Bessie, her face congested.

"Don't stand there gawking! Can't you— Has anybody been in here while I was out? Why don't you answer me?"

There were no half tones in Mrs.

Peets' voice, and when she was excited, her words were more metallic and monotonous than ever. Bessie dropped the nightgown she was folding and came forward. She went no nearer to Mrs. Peets than was necessary and made an inspection of the table. Breathing hard, her mistress watched, and suddenly she burst out:

"You took it! You know very well you did! You thought I wouldn't remember I left it. Very well, we shall see about this. We shall see. You don't leave this room until you're searched—do you hear?" And then, "Go to that telephone and call police headquarters and tell them to send a detective here at once! Do you hear me? I knew it all the time." And so forth, and so forth.

Mrs. Peets was angry, but not entirely so. She had never had a robbery before, but she could use one in her business, and she felt a definite, grim complacency as the thought of the newspaper publicity popped into her mind. While she watched the doors, Bessie had to call up the police and in a low voice ask for a detective to come, please, and arrest her. When she hung up the receiver, Mrs. Peets made her ring for the butler.

II.

In the kitchen, Bessie's young man was entertaining the butler—Griffin—the Swiss cook, the footman, and two frowsy, wide-eyed maids of all work who were cleaning stew pans, stopping now and then to look at each other and giggle hysterically. Griffin sat astride a chair in the correct English manner, smoking a brier pipe. The Swiss, proudly spinning his mustaches, and the tall, grinning footman, were perched on a table. Bessie's friend was lean and healthy and good looking. He was in fine spirits, talking steadily in a voice that was as clear as spring water.

He had been seeing Bessie for some weeks, but Mrs. Peets had known nothing about it until that morning. She had fished out of the mail a letter addressed in a great scrawling fist to "Miss Bessie Doak," and had come very near to opening it, just to satisfy her vulgar curiosity. Bessie, who was as pretty as a maid should be, and who had unbelievably long black hair, had reached eagerly for it. But Mrs. Peets had toyed with it in a tantalizing way and hadn't given it up until she had delivered herself of some mean and uncalled-for remarks about coarse, common young men and their danger to indiscriminating maidservants.

It was a privilege she had as an employer, and Bessie had been forced to listen with a semblance of humility. She didn't like Mrs. Peets. She hadn't had much experience in working for other people, and Mrs. Peets had a strange, malignant clutch on her that couldn't be shaken off. Bessie knew it for what it was, and tried to reason herself free, but Mrs. Peets came near to having the girl's soul in irons. Mean, nasty people very frequently have that power over sensitive young folks.

As I have said, Bessie had fine, long hair, and for that reason Mrs. Peets hated her. Nature hadn't been lavish with the mistress of the house, and what hair she did have a chemical mistake had made rust color, instead of golden, and very hard to match. With her disposition, to envy was to hate. But she was fascinated by the very thing that made her hate Bessie, and instead of getting rid of her, she treated her just decently enough to induce her to stay, and took a morbid pleasure in having the girl under her thumb.

Mrs. Peets was one of those women who shouldn't be allowed to have servants. To begin with, she was a Jones, of the Fall River Joneses, and the Townley part of her name was like what

hangs on the other end of a double watch chain—mysterious, perhaps, but purely parenthetical. To be frank, she had assumed it after Mr. Peets had died.

Her trouble was that she had read too many stories with butlers in them. Mr. Peets had been a simple man, who had believed in the kitchen living room. After the funeral, Mrs. Peets hadn't been happy until she had come to New York and got a butler and all the fixings, so she could live the life. Now an authentic, knock-kneed butler, with a stone face and bad feet, does not thrive unless he meets the best people. Griffin was an excellent man. He could carry on a long conversation with his eyebrows, he sighted along his nose even when reading in his room, and his house form! Why, at the All-round Butlers' Championships, held at Brighton in 1906, he had got the medals in two special hot-tureen-carrying events, amid a thunder of stomping feet, and in the classic "Receive, Attend, Serve, and Dismiss a Duke" he won over a field of twenty picked men with the stands rocking to tremendous roars of, "Well played, Griffin, old top! Well played!" Mrs. Peets was fortunate in having his services, but it was evident from the look on his face whenever he announced a guest that she would have to freshen up her mailing list with some strong talent or lose Griffin.

She had any number of people who could play solitaire with big bills in a high wind, but there was not a single museum piece. Not one of her guests could claim that his paternal ancestor swam over here on a plank before the steerage rates were lowered in the caravels.

She tried all the tricks, and lost out every time. She even attempted the dashing-New York-sportswoman rôle, and let herself be known as Mrs. "Jerry"—with quotes—Townley-Peets.

But she was too prudish to be devilish, and as a rider she was as timid and unconvincing as a baker on a livery nag in the Labor Day parade. Eventually she had to drop that idea and satisfy her sportswoman yearnings with Sunday pictorial-supplement half tones showing rows of the real people sitting around in hosiery-ad abandon at Tuxedo, Palm Beach, Bar Harbor, and Piping Rock.

Now and then chance thrust her in contact with her prey, and she would throw out her tentacles and make a shameless grab. There was Allan Young, for instance. Allan, big-game hunter and naturalist, with a year's bag of skins, heads, horns, and tusks, had happened to be coming back on the same boat from Cairo. He stood high in the community. When his father had died, his will had been telegraphed all over the country, and it had taken up a page and a half in the busy election season. Without warning, Allan could walk in to any of the difficult homes right at banquet time, and, far from sitting down to an extra plate, he would be the guest of the evening.

There had been no romance in Mrs. Peets' attack on him. He merely held the master key that fitted all the locks she had tried to pick. Well, you can't help meeting people on a ship. Allan, cornered, had suffered for twenty minutes, and then had escaped edgeways. The rest of the trip he had taken his meals in his cabin. Mrs. Peets hadn't given up. She considered it an acquaintance, and after they had got back, she had sent him one invitation after another. But Allan had a devoted man who doted on picking up things, no matter where his master threw them. And so it went.

The best Mrs. Peets had been able to do was a nice old widow, too refined to protest vigorously, who had in her house in Washington Square all the mahogany from her great-great-grand-

father's place, including a table that Lafayette had good-naturedly elected to sleep on when her ancestor was putting up the entire headquarters staff of the Colonial army for the night; and a thin, tired man with corn-silk mustaches who for two glorious years had been an under secretary in the embassy at St. Petersburg, and who was waiting for some one to get him a dignified post in the consular service.

He slipped "duchess" and "marquise" into his conversation as confidently as you or I say "mayor" and "janitor," and he had a flat place on his knee for a teacup, so he went big with Mrs. Peets. The night of the robbery he was going to take her to the theater. They had dined alone, and after dinner she had excused herself to run upstairs and fix her hair. He had had a high ball brought into the library, and he waited there, a copy of "The Tatler" in his lap, and now and then he stroked his mustache with a gesture that seemed to indicate a great deal longer mustache than his would ever be.

III.

Usually, when taking his ease, Griffin sat in his shirt sleeves, but now, out of deference to Bessie's fellow, he had his coat on. At the whine of the buzzer he had only to stand up, drop his pipe, and, in strict observance to Article XXIV., "Butler's Almanac and Guide," space his elbows and arch his back.

"Begging your pardon for seeming to absent myself, sir," he said. "This interruption is most annoying."

The young man nodded and smiled. "Will you tell Miss Doak I am here?"

Griffin bowed, turned stiffly, and left the room.

The young man (we'll call him Allan, because that was his name—Allan Young) went on telling about a Masai boy who wore, thrust through his nose,

a pearl-handled penknife with no blades. Allan's African stories were always like that. You never heard him talk about raising his faithful old 405, waiting until he could see the rhino's pores, and then sending in a brain shot, bringing down the beast so close to him that its dying breath blew dirt over his boots. No. To hear him, you might think he had never fired at anything more dangerous than a clay pipe on a wheel in a BB spat gallery at Coney Island, and he wouldn't care if you did think so. He had all of the independence that his Yankee forefathers used to boast before the ravages of the what-will-the-neighbors-say plague stole their strength. Up to the time when he met Bessie on the boat, he had cared not a rap what any one thought of him.

Bessie, too, had had to change some of her views after meeting him. One of her convictions had been that all young men with money were rotten. From the examples she had seen at Mrs. Peets', she couldn't do a whole lot for the younger members of the solvent set. Those who didn't try to kiss her when she passed in the hall scared her modesty with the arrogant freedom of their speech, and none of them worried because he had been drunk when he had left the house the last time he had called. Allan was not that kind, and she had known it from the first.

To be sure, their meeting had been a little irregular. They had happened to be standing side by side one evening at the rail on the sun deck, looking down at the steerage, where some Italians were dancing to the tune of a concertina and a mandolin. He had commented to her on one of the dancers, and she had laughed and answered him. And then, because he had seemed friendly, and his eyes and his smile were nice, she had talked more to him. She had been lonesome, for servants

do not have a joyous time on a ship, even when they travel first class.

When he had first spoken to her, he hadn't thought that she was the Princess Sonia, traveling incog. He had known she was Mrs. Peets' maid, but he had been tired to death of the gushing ladies on the boat who wanted him to make speech continually about the cute beasts of the field and the cunning birds of the air, and besides—well, he didn't know how it was, but he had wanted to talk to Bessie and to hear her talk.

So every night after that, except twice, when it rained, they had walked the deck together, and it had been very, very wonderful to her. She had talked to him with a freedom that had been new and surprising to her. That had been one of her changes. When I tell you she was a suffragette, you mustn't get the impression that she was just working as a maid so she could write a book about it. No, she was a sure-enough maidservant, but she had ideas of her own.

Always she had been secretive, holding securely all confidences intrusted to her, but giving none of her own in exchange. It had used to please her to think she could keep things to herself so. But when she had begun to get acquainted with Allan, she had learned that what she had considered a virtue was nothing but lack of faith.

She had told him all about her hopes and plans and ambitions, and something about her trials; not much, though, for she was a cheerful soul and didn't like to exploit her woes. It hadn't been long before she had learned that she had been harboring some opinions of the opposite sex that were unjust. Once she had boasted that she would never be a slave to any man. At the time, it had sounded very grand and big and defiant. The night the ship had docked, she had said good-by to Allan, expecting never to see him again, and she had

thought of that boast, and her eyes had been misty as she had gone down the companionway to her cabin to pack up.

Allan hadn't thought that he would ever see her again, either. But all the while he had been shaking hands with people who were glad to see him back, he had had a queer feeling that had made all the pleasure he had been looking forward to in his home-coming seem very trivial. He had fought off the feeling, for he hadn't wanted to fall in love. It had scared him, because he had been as free as an eagle, and he hadn't wanted to give up his liberty.

But he just hadn't been able to stay away from Bessie. The second night they were in town, he had located the tradesmens' and servants' entrance gate at Mrs. Peets' house, and had found his way to the rear door. It had been a new experience, and he had liked it. By the time Bessie had appeared, he was old friends with all the servants in sight, for whatever he did he did well. At first Bessie had been horrified, but after a while she had thought it kind of funny, and she wouldn't have been human if she hadn't enjoyed a healthy glow of triumph at succeeding where her mistress had failed.

Allan was pretty busy at the museum, superintending the unpacking of his specimens and helping with the arrangements for mounting them, but he had found time to see Bessie every day. She had one afternoon and one evening off a week. On these holidays he used to take her to some quiet place to eat, and then they would go to the theater or ride in his car in the evening or dance at a hall in Harlem where no one would recognize them. She had been responsible for the clandestine part.

"It might make trouble for you," she had told him. "At least you'd get some unpleasant notoriety. So let's not be silly."

At the time there were no house

guests, so every evening when she had to work he had showed up. Most of these visits had taken place in the kitchen, but if her mistress was out, Bessie had entertained him in the library. Griffin was their good friend, and both young people had enjoyed the novelty of the thing.

Both had struggled hard to keep from falling in love. Allan had given up first. He had surrendered completely and was all for having her leave at once, so they could be married. But she had held off. In the past, when she had liked a person, she had gone to extremes in trying to conceal it, and she couldn't change all at once. One night he had made her admit that she cared for him a whole lot, but at a time like that young people deal in such subtle, pastel-shaded meanings—she wouldn't say she loved him.

And then there was another thing. She didn't think she wanted to be married. She wanted to be independent.

"Woman is the equal, and in many cases the superior, of man," she had stated to him. "Of course she can't do all the work he does, but in the things she can do she usually excels. She is keener than a man, the more quick-witted of the two, the more resourceful——"

"Ah, Bessie, you've been to another suffragette meeting—I can see that," he had interrupted.

"No, I really think that——"

"Oh," he had said smilingly, "I won't argue with you. We're wasting valuable time. Even if all that is so—you need protection——"

"No, I don't," she had said quickly. "I can take care of myself. I always have."

"Well, supposing you have. Why should you continue to, when I'm here trying to take on the job?"

She had thought a moment.

"Besides, I wouldn't want to leave here with the feeling that I've been a

failure. I want to know I have been efficient. I want to please Mrs. Peets. That may sound funny to you, knowing what I go through here, but I have a certain pride—— If I should leave her now, it would be awful to go through life knowing I hadn't been satisfactory in my work——"

"Oh, forget it!" he had growled amiably. "It may be all right to have the courage of your convictions, but you're wasting yourself. You couldn't please that woman if you should give her the only genuine copy of an affidavit telling why the Sphinx and the Pyramids were built, and how. I can't understand how any one who knows you can help liking you, but as long as she doesn't—well, you ought to be glad. Her approval wouldn't be worth enough to pay for the wear and tear on the words she'd use to express it."

She had smiled at him and shaken her head.

"You're wasting your time," he had persisted, but she hadn't admitted it.

And that's the way it stood on the night she had got so exasperated by Mrs. Peets' insults that she had forgotten all about her good intentions, and, while combing her mistress' hair, had given it a smart yank. Which, after all, was only human.

IV.

Griffin stood in the doorway and gazed inquiringly at the flushed and angry woman sitting at the dressing table. At the window in the far end of the room, Bessie was standing, looking down at the empty street.

"Griffin, send McLeod here at once——" Mrs. Peets began.

Mrs. McLeod was the housekeeper.

"She isn't in," said Griffin smoothly. "This is Tuesday night——"

Mrs. Peets flung out an arm in a gesture of irritation.

"Of course she has to be out just

when I need her!" She had run rapidly up to her high, metallic tone for moments of excitement. "This—person"—venomously—"must be searched. She has seen fit to steal——"

Bessie flashed around and faced them.

"I did not!" she cried. "Don't you believe her, Griffin! I never took it!"

"Silence!" screamed Mrs. Peets.

Griffin stared from one to the other, and so amazed was he that his elbows lost for the moment their wonted rigidity.

"I beg pardon—is something missing?" he asked quietly.

"My jewels—my brooch—my diamond brooch worth thousands of dollars—stolen the moment my back was turned! I'm amazed at her boldness! How she thought she could get out of the house with it——"

Bessie's lip curled. Griffin looked at her, then stepped into the room.

"I'm sure some mistake has been made. Perhaps the brooch has only been mislaid. If I may be permitted to search——"

"There's no mistake, Griffin," Mrs. Peets replied. "It was here on my dressing table——"

Griffin advanced to the table, and, while Bessie watched hopefully and Mrs. Peets scornfully, he made a careful inspection, lifting up all the toilet articles and putting them down again.

"Are you quite sure, madam, that the brooch was here?" he asked finally, stepping back and setting his elbows.

Mrs. Peets tossed her arms.

"Sure? Of course I'm sure! I've sent for an officer, and unless this young woman confesses and returns my property, she shall be arrested."

Griffin was horror-struck. What goes on! Why, he might as well be serving in the home of a circus proprietor! He looked helplessly at Bessie, and, remembering, told her with his eyebrows and a downward-pointing

forefinger that Allan was waiting below.

"If I may be so free," he said, "you must be mistaken. Miss Doak has always proved herself——"

"Griffin! Don't argue with me! Go down and tell Mr. Waterman to step up here and help me watch the doors until the officer comes. And hurry back yourself. At once, please, Griffin!"

There was nothing for him to do but go. He rattled down the stairs faster than he ever had since he had worn knickerbockers, and hurried into the library.

Very much bored with everything, Mr. Roger Waterman was looking at the ice in the bottom of his empty high-ball glass and wondering if there was a bell within reach so he could ring for another, when Griffin burst in.

"Oh," said Mr. Waterman, sinking back in his chair, "about to ring for you. I believe I'll have another of these."

"Beg pardon, sir—Mrs. Townley-Peets wishes to see you at once in her apartments."

Mr. Waterman stroked his mustache, and his pop eyes roved upward at Griffin and then back to his glass on the table.

"Odd! Hunh! Funny! Hunh! Queer! Hunh! Oh, well!"

He smote the chair arms preparatory to getting up, muttered "Strange! Hunh!" then jumped to his feet and followed Griffin out. Griffin led him to the upper hall, pointed out Mrs. Peets' door, then left him and sped downstairs again. This time he went to the kitchen on a mission of his own.

As he came in, Allan was answering some question of the footman's about zebras, and the two maids were listening, open-mouthed.

"Huh—her-r-r!" the butler coughed. "May I have a word with you, Mr. Young?"

Allan grinned at the footman and nodded good-naturedly, then went out and stood behind the door with Griffin.

"Miss Doak is in trouble, sir. Mrs. Peets accuses her of stealing," said Griffin, his accents showing where his sympathy lay.

"What! Where is she? Where are they now?" Allan demanded.

"In Mrs. Peets' rooms. I thought you'd better know—she has sent for a police officer."

Allan gasped:

"Here—show me the way—— Wait till I get my hat——"

He dashed into the kitchen and grabbed his hat, to the amazement of the Swiss chef and the footman and the girls, and ran out again.

Griffin led the way through a darkened room to the narrow stairway the servants used, and up to Mrs. Peets' boudoir. And after him crept the entire company from the kitchen, eager to find out what was going on.

V.

For a man who liked to think there was an imperial spy hiding behind every tree and screen, and to whom imbroglia and intrigue were as simple as a bit of string, Mr. Roger Waterman was having a hard time assimilating the facts Mrs. Peets shot at him. Now had it only been the papers that were missing! But a bauble that had been stolen for its intrinsic value—it was too much for him. While he pondered, he pulled his mustache and regarded Mrs. Peets with tired eyes.

"You must offer a reward," he said finally. "Notify the police and offer a reward. It's customary. Efficient chaps, the police. Finger prints and all that sort of thing. I understand they have remarkable dogs—uncanny beasts—trained to follow a thief and pin the fellow down with their teeth——"

Mrs. Peets sneered.

"Roger, sometimes you—— I—— Stupid!" she exploded. "Don't you understand? This—girl—is—the thief."

Roger gasped, glanced quickly at Bessie, then looked away, not liking to meet her scornful gaze.

"I—really—I—— This is a bit thick—— I believe I'll be going——"

He turned just as Allan burst into the room, and was sent spinning against the wall.

"Oh!" Bessie cried, and started forward. "Oh, Allan!"

"What's all the trouble about?" he asked, looking down at her.

Mrs. Peets sat up as if her chair had been charged with electricity. Her face should have been plaid, so quickly did conflicting emotions show there.

"Why, Mr. Young!" she gasped, and rose to her feet. And then she smiled. "This is a pleasure! I'm so glad you called. Griffin," reprovingly, "you shouldn't have directed Mr. Young up here." Then, with a sweet smile for Allan: "You find me a bit upset. I'm afraid I'll have to press you into service, if you will be so kind——"

"Howareyou," said Allan briefly, and for a moment all stood as they were—Mr. Waterman, who had his feet firmly under him at last; Griffin in the doorway, elbows set and knock knees trembling, the doorframe behind him almost filled with frankly curious kitchen faces; and the three tense principals in the chintz-draped boudoir.

Mrs. Peets tried out her voice again:

"Why, Mr. Young—this is——"

"It is. Will you kindly explain? I understand you accuse this young lady of robbing you."

Bessie, Mr. Waterman, and Mrs. Peets came out simultaneously with exclamations, and Griffin added three coughs to the confusion.

"Steady!" Allan warned, in an icy, clear voice. "Pardon, Miss Doak, what did you say?"

"I didn't take it, Allan. I don't know

anything about it," said Bessie hurriedly.

"Thanks. I know you didn't," he said calmly. "Now, Mrs. Peets, just what is missing, and where and how?"

The turmoil in Mrs. Peets' mind had been approximately perfect, but at this evidence of an understanding between her maid and the man who had declined to permit his name to be added to the house mailing list, the tangle might be said to be complete.

"Come, come, Mrs. Peets—we're waiting!" said Allan sharply.

Then Mr. Waterman came to life. He didn't like the job of knight that had been thrust upon him, but he felt he had to do something.

"I say, old man——" he began appealingly.

Allan gave the tired man in evening clothes a steady, appraising look.

"Shut up!" he said quietly; and then: "Well, Mrs. Peets?"

Her eyes flashed. First of all she was a firebrand.

"What business is it of yours?" she blazed out. "How dare you speak to me in that tone of voice! Leave this room immediately! Leave this——"

Allan laughed.

"You'll facilitate matters by answering my question."

"Mr. Waterman!" she cried. Roger rolled his eyes at her and looked away. "Griffin!" The butler was gazing at the ceiling and couldn't see her at all.

"Am I to be insulted in my own house?"

She glanced wildly about the room, and something in the doorway fascinated her for the moment. One of the slaves was grinning in a joyous leer that showed all three of her front teeth. Mrs. Peets stared and gasped. Was this a dream or one of those horrid realities that will persist in bobbing up?

Bessie whispered something to Allan.

"A diamond pin—is that what you lost, Mrs. Peets?" he demanded.

She glared at him.

"Y-e-ss!" she snapped, and in her own peppery way rushed into an account of the circumstances, winding up with the remark that when the policeman came, they would see what was what.

Allan listened gravely. Uppermost in his mind was the intention of shielding Bessie, even if he had to buy the officer, Troy weight. He noticed that the girl was showing signs of excitement, and he put a reassuring hand on her arm.

"Steady, dear!" he whispered. "Leave it to your Uncle George.

"Is this the table?" he asked, stepping forward.

Mrs. Peets stood aside to avoid contact with this unspeakable young ruffian. Mr. Waterman moved behind her with the same motive.

"You searched carefully, of course, before sending for the police?" Allan asked bluntly.

Mrs. Peets didn't bat an eye.

He looked down at the table, moved a scent bottle carelessly, then picked up a hairbrush, and, just to make his search more thorough, turned it over. The brooch was firmly caught in the bristles of the brush. Everybody started. Allen took up the brooch and looked at it; then he looked at Mrs. Peets and shook his head and grinned. Putting the jewel on the table, he went over to Bessie and smiled down at her.

"I guess you need me. I'm a kind of a handy man," he said in a low voice. "Go to your room and pack up the things you want to take away. I'll have the car outside in fifteen minutes."

She looked into his eyes and gave him a long message of great interest to him. He turned to Mrs. Peets.

"Miss Doak is going to leave you," he said quietly. "You are very sorry to lose her, because she has been so efficient. She has always given you the best of service, has she not?"

Mrs. Peets stared at him, hatred stamped vividly in her face.

"Hasn't she?"

Mrs. Peets did not answer.

"Hasn't she?" Allan roared.

"Yes," Mrs. Peets stammered, went pale, and fell back on Mr. Waterman. Mr. Waterman had been upset by the scene. He rolled his eyes helplessly and thrust out his arms as if to signal for a fair catch, and supported her, but he kept his fists closed, lest his attitude express fondness for the job.

At Allan's shout, one of the girls in the doorway gave a little cry and clutched at Griffin's coat sleeve with both hands, and just outside the door the other—the one with the gums—managed to seem to faint against her hero, the footman. The lone Swiss thought it was time to be going, so he slipped noiselessly down the back stairs.

"See?" said Allan triumphantly, and put his arm around Bessie. "Now get your things, dear, and I'll telephone for the car."

VI.

The detective got there the following afternoon and insisted on seeing Mrs. Peets. Griffin had just given notice, and what with one thing and another she was in a frame of mind. The tardy officer came away in a daze.

And at that very moment, Bessie and Allan were having a lot of fun filling in answers to questions on certain papers in the city clerk's office.

WJW

his daughter's going on the stage—with all it implied for a woman in the eighteenth century—there is no record of his protest, and it did no good. There is record, however, that he sailed away from England at about this time—leaving his wife behind, in favor of a younger and more devoted woman—and that he said publicly to Mrs. Darby, on the eve of his departure:

"Take care that no dishonor falls upon my daughter. If she be not safe at my return, I shall annihilate you."

A touchingly beautiful sentiment from the old moralist who had introduced Mary to Lord Northington's notice! And so, with his young sweetheart, the loving father sails out of our sketch. I am rather glad he does. He seems to have been a fine sort of man to forget.

During the *Cordelia* rehearsals, Mary met a young army officer. It was a mutual case of love at first sight. They became formally engaged. Mary even talked of giving up the stage and settling down to the dull domestic life of a garrison town. Then, by mere chance, she found out that her adored officer already had a perfectly good wife living. He had neglected to mention this when he had proposed to Mary, and she felt very badly indeed about his carelessness.

Her heart was in excellent condition to be caught on the rebound. And the catcher did not miff. He was a young fellow named Robinson, an articled clerk to the law firm of Vernon & Elderton.

Robinson had lodgings opposite the Darbys in Chancery Lane. He represented himself as the son of wealthy parents. This interested Mrs. Darby. He helped nurse Mary through an attack of smallpox. Mrs. Darby—herself convalescing slowly from the same disease and therefore full of repentance—urged Mary to marry Robinson and settle down.

Mary dutifully obeyed. She became the wife of the supposedly rich clerk, and she dismissed all hope of becoming an actress. She found out, by the way, that his parents were not rich, but were merely unmarried. She and her husband led a gayly extravagant life together for a few years, spending money faster than either or both of them could earn it. For the means whereby such problems in vital mathematics are very temporarily solved, I commend you to Thackeray's essay on "Living Upon Nothing a Year," and to the joint careers of Rawdon Crawley and Becky Sharp.

The reckoning came with great suddenness, as reckonings have a nasty way of doing. Robinson was one day arrested for a debt of eight thousand five hundred dollars; and, as he had no money and no way of getting any, he was lodged in the Debtors' Prison in Fleet Street.

That was a merry old English custom—imprisonment for debt—and it continued in practice for many a long year after Mary Robinson was dead and gone. A man owed money. He could not pay it. So he was thrown into prison, there to stay until his friends chose to get him out. If his friends did not so choose, or if they could not raise the cash, he stayed there until he died. This example did not prevent others from running into hopeless debt, as the overcrowded state of the various debtors' prisons proved. The whole thing was a queer commentary on the British nation—a nation, by the way, that "legally" burned a woman to death at the stake as late as 1790.

Mary and her tiny daughter shared Robinson's imprisonment, which lasted nearly a year. Then, through some means best known to herself, Mary was able to lay by enough money to cancel the debt and set her husband free.

Robinson promptly showed his appreciation of her care by falling in love

with another woman and neglecting his wife right shamelessly. She was penniless; she was practically deserted; her dream of domesticity had changed to a nightmare, her ménage to a menagerie. Again she sought a chance to go on the stage. And news of her distress and her ambition and her loveliness—especially her loveliness—reached the manager of the Drury Lane Theater. He sought her out.

This same manager was just then the most popular man in England. Duelist, visionary, toper, rake, sublime wit, spendthrift, true lover and false husband, genius and glutton, he shone like a meteor across the stodgy British firmament. His name was Richard Brinsley Sheridan, chum of royalty and destined to end his career in a debtors' prison. This was the man who came to Mary's aid.

"One summer morning, when things were at their worst," she writes, "I was thrown into confusion by a visit from a no less celebrated gentleman than Mr. Sheridan. I was overcome with confusion. When I had recovered, Mr. Sheridan asked me to recite some passages from Shakespeare. I became alarmed; I was frightened. But the bewitchingly attractive manner of Mr. Sheridan reassured me."

Sheridan, impressed by her undoubted gifts, and falling easy victim to her charm, arranged for her appearance at Drury Lane in "Romeo and Juliet." Garrick, who had lately retired from the stage, was her tutor in the rôle of *Juliet*. William Brereton was the *Romeo*.

From the very first performance she was a glowing success. Theatrical London acclaimed Sheridan's "find." She was the darling of a whole country's playgoers. One triumph followed another.

There was but a single setback. That was when she essayed to play *Amanda* in "A Trip to Scarborough," which

Sheridan put on as a new comedy of his own, but which was really the revamping of a popular old play called "The Relapse," by Van Brugh.

The audience recognized the fraud and proceeded to hiss the actors off the stage. All the company fled save only Mary Robinson. She essayed to go on with her part; but an avalanche of cat-calls drowned her voice. As she stood hesitating, his royal highness, the Duke of Cumberland, leaned out of a box and bellowed cheerily to her:

"Stand your ground. It's the play, not you, they're hissing."

The house cheered. The situation was saved.

For many months Mary grew more and more popular with the public. Robinson was well content to live off her salary, and he shut his eyes to several rather startling affairs of which she was the heroine. From the time she first learned of her husband's faithlessness, she seems to have lost all interest in him and in fidelity. She merely supported him and let it go at that—an arrangement that seems to have been highly satisfactory to them both.

It was on the night of December 3, 1779, that she met the man whose love for her has made her immortal instead of merely immoral.

The play was "A Winter's Tale." Mrs. Robinson was cast for the rôle of *Perdita*. There is nothing thrilling about this part. It can be—and usually is—played by almost any girl who can look pretty and young, dance tolerably well, and read her lines with average intelligence.

Yet Mary played it with wondrous charm and daintiness. Perhaps all the more so to-night because she had heard that the seventeen-year-old Prince of Wales was to be in the royal box. And already the young prince's reputation had festoons of blood-colored and golden spangles dangling from it.

Will you let me stop my story for a minute and tell you, as briefly as I can, a few things about this same precious princeling? He is worth reading about, if only because he was one of the most picturesque scoundrels unhung.

His name was George Augustus Frederic. He was then the Prince of Wales. Later, he was the prince regent. Latest, he was George IV., King of England. Incidentally, he was the eldest son of King George III., the pig-headed old fellow who lost America and then lost his mind. The old king and Queen Charlotte, his wife, had brought up young George in the odor of stuffy sanctity, to strait-laced ideas, to stupid respectability. And by the time he was sixteen, he began to make them wish he had never been born.

He was a born gambler, crook, libertine, liar, spendthrift, hypocrite. He lied to his parents. He lied to his countless sweethearts. He lied to the friends who were trying to stand between him and the consequences of his rotten deeds. He was a drunkard, a hog, a welsher. He was "warned off the track" by the Jockey Club. He was threatened with ruin by his creditors. He seduced the daughters of the comrades who trusted and protected him. He did his best to wreck the country, and was prevented from succeeding in this feat only by the wisdom of his ministers and the power of Parliament.

Withal, he was handsome and magnetic. His perfect manner gave him the title of "First Gentleman of Europe." He had much to do with driving his father insane, and after he became prince regent, he used to pray aloud and blasphemously that his father would die and thus make him king.

When at last he was crowned, in 1820, the coronation day was fearfully hot. After the long ceremonies in the Abbey were over, he retired to the Star Chamber to meditate alone. There, a little later, his attendants found him.

He was sprawling comfortably in a big chair, a cigar in one hand, a bottle of champagne in the other, the crown askew on his sweating forehead, and not one stitch of clothing on his fat, but royal body.

During his regency, from 1810 to 1820, he encouraged and led a national life of immorality that was the byword of all the world and that was never before or since known in England.

But the seventeen-year-old boy who sat staring at twenty-one-year-old Mrs. Robinson's performance of *Perdita*, that December evening in 1779, was not yet the monster of later years. He was merely making a very creditable start in that direction. Says a British chronicler:

"He had not yet had time to develop the traits which were to make of his title, 'The First Gentleman of Europe,' a sneering byword that was to live through centuries. To-night, glowing with handsome youth, he seemed a veritable Prince Charming. From the moment *Perdita* tripped on the stage with the innocent abandon and grace of the wood nymph, his eyes never left her.

"The lady affected a bewilderment delightful to see. Every one in the audience noted the rapture of the prince. As the final curtain was falling—*Perdita* in the arms of the mother, restored to life—his royal highness made *Perdita* a gallant and romantic bow. She blushed her gratitude. Crowds poured into the greenroom to felicitate Mrs. Robinson on her conquest.

"I told you so," said 'Gentleman' Smith, the *Leontes* of the evening, giving *Perdita* a playful hug of congratulation. 'You've brought him down at the first shot from those dark eyes. They'd upset an Egyptian mummy.'

"Five days later, Mrs. Robinson received a visit from Lord Malden, who was afterward Earl of Essex. With

much apparent diffidence, his lordship handed her a letter addressed to 'Perdita' and signed 'Florizel.' *Florizel*, in 'The Winter's Tale,' you will remember, is the king's son who loves *Perdita*. Mrs. Robinson, guessing at the identity, but slyly affecting ignorance, asked:

"Well, my lord, and what does this mean?"

"Can you not guess the writer?" said Lord Malden.

"Perhaps yourself, my lord?"

"Upon my honor, no," said Malden. 'I should not have dared to address you on so short an acquaintance.'

"Mrs. Robinson pressed for the name.

"He hesitated, confused; then, stammering, said:

"I hope I will not forfeit your good opinion, but——"

"But what?"

"I couldn't refuse, for the letter is from the Prince of Wales."

"Mrs. Robinson professed amazement, but secretly gloated over her triumph. Malden bore to her a second letter. *Florizel* was to be at an oratorio on the to-morrow. If she would attend, she would 'learn the identity of the writer.' Mrs. Robinson attended the concert. There in a box was the Prince of Wales, paying devoted court to her with his eyes.

"Next day a newspaper called attention to a passage from Dryden as being particularly interesting to the prince, who

"Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed, and looked, and sighed again.

"The *Florizel* letters now become more piquant. Mrs. Robinson, artfully holding off, virtuously declined to meet the prince."

Yet she was not long able to withstand the whirlwind courtship of her seventeen-year-old adorer. Nor is it known that she tried her very, *very* best

to do so. Of his avalanche of love letters she writes in her memoirs:

"There was a beautiful ingenuousness in his language, a warm and enthusiastic admiration expressed in every line, which interested and charmed me."

One day the prince sent her a miniature of himself, accompanied by a small paper heart which bore the sentiments: "Unalterable to my *Perdita* through life" and "*Je ne change pas qu'en mourant.*"

George, aided by his own brother, the Duke of York, and by Malden, at last won her consent to a rendezvous in the Kew Gardens, then to more clandestine meetings, the Duke of York and Lord Malden playing propriety by accompanying the prince, but remaining discreetly in the background out of sight.

"Often," Mary writes, "have I lamented the distance which destiny has placed between us. How would my soul have idolized such a husband! The Duke of York was now on the eve of quitting the country for Hanover. The prince was on the point of receiving his first independent establishment; and the apprehension that his attachment to a married woman might injure him in the opinion of the world rendered caution of importance. . . . The prince's attachment seemed to increase daily. Delightful as were our meetings at Kew, I now only looked forward to the adjusting of his royal highness' establishment for the public avowal of our mutual attachment."

Yielding to the importunities of the prince, Mrs. Robinson had given up her profession. On the last night of her stage engagement, she played *Sir Harry Revel* in the comedy of "The Miniature Picture." Meeting the actor, Moody, in the greenroom between acts, she told him that this was to be her last night on the stage, her farewell to the work she loved. Then she tried to

smile as she repeated the words of a popular song:

"Oh, joy to you all in full measure,
So wishes and prays Widow Brady,"

and on the last word she burst into tears.

A letter from the prince just before Mary's retirement from the stage contained a bond setting forth a promise of the sum of twenty thousand pounds—one hundred thousand dollars—to be paid her on the date of the prince's coming of age. The document was sealed with the royal arms. It was not worth the cost of its sealing wax. It was never paid, any more than were the prince's juster debts.

Mary's new life was merry—while it lasted. And it did not last long. The prince, now entering, untrammelled, upon life, gambled and drank in a way to make even the oldest debauchees gulp with wonder. "Perdita" Robinson's own displays of extravagance were the scandal of the whole city.

"To-day," writes Hawkins, "she was a *paysanne* with her straw hat tied at the back of her head, looking as if too new to what she passed to know what she looked at. Yesterday she perhaps had been the dressed belle of Hyde Park, powdered, padded, painted. Tomorrow she would be the Amazon of the riding house. But be she what she might, the hats of the fashionable promenaders swept the ground as she passed."

The prince was enjoying it all. He encouraged Mary to run into debt; then gracefully got out of paying her bills. Here is a little extract from Cook's denunciation of him:

"He indulged without limit in dresses, equipages, private plays, and gallantries. In one year his wardrobe alone exceeded fifty thousand dollars. His passion for Mrs. Robinson was paraded in the most public manner. He was seen at her side at masque-

rades, the ball, the opera, the theaters, even at the royal hunts in Windsor Forest and the reviews in the presence of the king. The prince's favorite had reached her apogee. It was very splendid shame while it lasted."

Patterning themselves on the example of Antony and Cleopatra, the two lovers used to fare forth together in disguise, through the slums and so forth, in search of adventure. But George prudently rendered these exploits safe by taking along always a squad of professional bruisers to protect him.

One night, disguised as a Spanish grandee and a flower girl, George and Mary went to a fancy ball. A common sailor lurched across the ballroom floor to them and demanded a dance. Mary refused. The sailor insisted. George interfered, and ordered the sailor to begone. Then he noticed, to his horror, that his guard of bullies had lost him in the crowd.

Before he could retreat in search of them, the sailor hit him in the jaw. The police nabbed both combatants and hauled them off to the station house. There, George unmasked and made known his identity to the apologetic bobbies, who started to vent their rage on the poor sailor.

But the latter also unmasked, revealing the jolly face of George's younger brother, the Duke of Clarence, the sailor prince, who was later to become William IV., King of England.

Crowds followed Mary wheresoever she went. She tells how frequently she had to "escape" from Ranelagh by a secret door, to avoid the impertinent curiosity of people who "crowded round to gaze upon her as if she was a barber's block." When she entered a shop, throngs gathered to gaze upon the "prince's lady."

The daily and weekly papers reeked with scandalous stories of her association with the prince and with sugges-

tions that she distributed her favors to others, notably to Lord Malden. Perhaps she did. Perhaps she didn't. There was nothing offensively exclusive about Mary.

And at last the fickle Florizel put an end to her dream. This is her version of the "first rift," as told in the memoirs:

"The period now approached," she says, "that was to destroy all the fairy visions which had folded my mind with dreams of happiness. At the moment when everything was preparing for his royal highness' establishment, when I looked impatiently for the dawn of that day in which I might behold my adored friend gracefully receiving the acclamations of his future subjects, when I might enjoy the public protection of that being for whom I gave up all, I received from his royal highness a cold and unkind letter, briefly informing me that we must meet no more."

Twice she tried to see the prince; twice was he denied to her. To all her letters he remained silent.

Th "establishment," by the way, of which she speaks, was Carlton House, to which George moved the moment his father could be cajoled into letting him have a home of his own and escape from the stiff-necked propriety of life in the royal household.

From the moment of her separation from the prince, Mary became the butt of public derision and obloquy. Jeering crowds surrounded her home in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens. One eloquent letter from George—written, perhaps, in a moment of remorse—gave a transitory gleam of comfort. Yet he still refused to see her. She was thirty-five thousand dollars in debt and had no means of paying. The public would not tolerate her return to her profession. "All doors were closed against her.

"Lord Malden's assiduities daily increased," she writes. "I had no other

friend. His attentions exposed me to humiliation. But through him the prince assured me of his wishes to renew our former friendship and affection and urged me to meet him at the house of Malden in Clarges Street. I consented. The prince met me with every appearance of tender attachment, declaring that he had never for one moment ceased to love me, but that I had many concealed enemies who were exerting every effort to undermine me. We passed some hours in the most friendly and delightful conversation, and I began to flatter myself that all our differences were adjusted. But what words can express my surprise and chagrin when, on meeting his royal highness the very next day in Hyde Park, he turned his head to avoid seeing me and even affected *not to know me!*"

Like the royal blackguard he was, he had "cut dead" the woman he had abandoned. Yet she adds:

"I did then, and ever shall, consider his mind nobly and honorably organized, nor could I teach myself to believe that a heart the seat of so many virtues could possibly become inhuman and unjust."

One of George's first acts, upon attaining his majority, had been to repudiate the bond for one hundred thousand dollars, and he was quite content to leave Mary to starve. But Charles James Fox obtained for her an annuity of twenty-five hundred dollars as a last memento of "Florizel."

"One has no desire to condone the fault of Mary Robinson," comments Edward Robbins. "But we must not forget that she suffered from the first from bad surroundings. At the outset she had a selfish father and a foolish, weak mother. Then, in the prime of her rare beauty, when noblemen paid her devoted court, she had no better protector than a husband who was only fit to live in debtors' prisons and sponging houses. And think of the laxity of

the high society in which she moved! King George III. might play the royal prude with all sincerity, detesting vice as he detested the Americans; but a whole regiment of Georges could not have stemmed the tide of London dissipation. The middle and lower classes were neither better nor worse than they had been, or than they now are, but the men of rank were too often given over to high play, to drinking, and to worse. It seemed as if under the swimming, bleary eyes of the young Prince of Wales the joyous times of Charles II. were to be revived. This George encouraged profligacy and brutal pugilism and contempt of womanly purity, while the world of fashion called him a paragon of gentility."

It would be pleasant—extremely pleasant—to leave each super-woman in the height of her damnable glory; or else to wind up her biography with a crashing cataclysm that should leave the reader gasping. That would be good fiction and would balance the story prettily. But in real life—perhaps you've noticed it—people and things have an irritating way of failing to live up to their fictional possibilities.

For example, in fiction, Theophrastus Spogg swipes ten cents from the foreign-mission box at the age of eight. At fifteen he steals a box of dad's cigars. At twenty-two he steals and weds his best friend's best girl. All that prelude is a certain proof that, in the thirties, he will rob the bank or forge a check or palm the missing will, and that his deathbed confession alone will save the hero and restore Doodlethorpe Grange to the rightful heir.

Whereas, in real life, Theophrastus Spogg steals the missionary dime, the paternal cabanas, the bespoken damsel—with the full "consent of the governed"—and then has a most illogical way of settling down into a decent and God-fearing and plodding grubber, who

at fifty-two gets his half tone in the "Fifty Board of Trade Members" page in the commercial section, and at seventy-eight takes cold and dies because, on some hot April day, he fails to live up to the maxim: "Never put off till tomorrow the winter flannels you should wear to-day."

No; in real life people are pig-headed and refuse to run true to fictional form. So I am shamefacedly forced to conclude each of these super-women stories with the windy anticlimax of a running-down music box. I'm sorry. Honestly it isn't my fault.

Yet in Mary's life there was one more garish flicker before the flame began to gutter and wane. When she found that England would have no more of her, and that the debtors' prison doors were invitingly open, and that her prospects of going to jail were daily growing brighter, she fled to France.

At Paris, as she sat in a box at the opera, one gala night, she chanced to attract the notice of Philippe, Duke of Orleans, later to be known, from his turncoat principles, as "old Philip Egalité."

The duke fell in love with Mary at their first meeting—ardently, flatteringly in love with her. "They manage these things better in France."

The affair was brief, but glittering. During its course, Mary formed the acquaintance of Marie Antoinette, who took a strong liking to the pretty expatriate actress and invited her to several court functions.

She met Louis XVI., too, but quite failed to win more than a grunt of approval from that fat-brained and ice-blooded monarch, who never could understand, to his dying day, why men should make fools of themselves over a woman.

For a time Mary fluttered happily in the butterfly court that was so blithely and so blindly nearing its season of

killing frost. Her lover, the duke, gave a *fête champêtre* in her honor. The French hailed her as "la belle Anglaise." Marie Antoinette knitted a silk purse for her.

But in a little while the Duke of Orleans tired of his English sweetheart. King and queen and court and populace no longer found her a novelty. She had outstayed her welcome, and she drifted back to England. There she had a brief romance whose hero, was Colonel Tarleton, the British officer who was so enthusiastically and justly hated in the Carolinas during the American Revolution.

Tarleton fell ill and sent for her. To reach him, Mary had to spend a cold night in a traveling coach. She caught rheumatic fever, which left her with paralysis in the legs. Her day as a heartbreaker was dead.

She supported herself for a time by writing very ginger-bready poetry and very mushy fiction. Also a play called "Nobody," which was a satire on feminine foibles. The play had a run of three consecutive nights. Then it was withdrawn, slain by the hisses of virtuous women and their liveried servants. Mary wrote a second play, "The Sicilian Lover," that had little better luck.

She had enslaved George IV., Philippe of Orleans, Sheridan, Garrick, Malden, Tarleton, and a whole cross-section of Burke's Peerage. Yet at forty she was a lonely wreck. Her beauty was faded, her health was gone, her vogue had vanished. She was all but a pauper. Long ago her little pension had been swallowed up in an industrious get-rich-quick effort to turn it into a fortune. She was dying, and she knew it.

She wrote piteous letters to noblemen to whom in her heyday she had

lent big sums of money, and who, with aristocratic scorn of trifles, had neglected to return the loans. She wrote asking for all or part of what they owed her. The British postal system had not yet been reformed by Hill and Anthony Trollope, and her letters doubtless miscarried, for they were never answered.

She also roused a moment's public interest by writing a long and sentimental poem to the prince, her old lover, and publishing it. The poem is not worth printing here in its entirety. I will quote only a few lines of it to give you the general idea:

Thou art no more my bosom's friend.

Here must the sweet delusion end

That charmed my senses many a year,

Through smiling summers, winter's drear.

I feel—I feel the poisoned dart

Pierce the life nerve within my heart.

Soon shall the vital heat be o'er;

These throbbing pulses beat no more!

And several other stanzas to the same sobby, pre-Victorian effect.

Then came the last stage. Mary was moved from London to a little cottage in Surrey. There, on the day after Christmas, 1800, she died. She was buried in old Windsor churchyard, two literary associates forming her funeral procession.

Royalty and the theater and the world at large had forgotten her. But George was momentarily reminded of old days by receiving, soon after her death, a lock of hair. As the hair was quite gray, the prince failed to recognize it until he read the letter in which it was inclosed—a letter that apologetically explained the sending as Mary's last spoken wish.

The March number of AINSLEE'S will contain the next article in Mr. Terhune's Super-Women series: "Lucretia Borgia: the Much-married Siren."



A LITTLE company took its ease with satisfaction in the common room of the inn of the Golden Bee at Moulin-les-Fontaines. The floor was sanded; the tables of unpainted wood. On the wall hung a calendar for the current year, 1802; and some hand, possibly approving, possibly protesting, had underlined the day that dated the signing of the Treaty of Amiens. Beside this, the same hand, perhaps, had scrawled a sketch of the face of the first consul, which was a caricature or a compliment as you pleased to take it.

Through the open window the fragrant air of the fading summer wasted its sweet upon senses swimming in liquor. The company was made up of local folk—local farmer, local trader, local barber, local horse leech, and the like. One big man, Triton of the minnowhood, sprawled in the best seat. This was the Sieur Goudron, notablest farmer of the place, bulky, muscular, truculent, clad after a fashion that aped squireen gentility; unquestionably king of the castle among his boon companions.

All these were habitués, but there was a stranger present—there was Monsieur Poirier. Monsieur sat a little apart, and watched the company with detached good humor; a quiet man

of middle height, middle age, with shaven face, small, respectable wig, smug brown garments. A very shrewd observer might have noted that while the face smiled patiently, there was no companionable smile in the steady eyes. The landlord of the Golden Bee knew Monsieur Poirier for a commercial traveler, representing a newly founded Parisian house, who had first visited Moulin-les-Fontaines about a fortnight earlier. To the Picardy landlord Monsieur Poirier's slight accent suggested a Breton origin. In Brittany Monsieur Poirier might, no doubt, have passed for a Picard.

Monsieur Poirier, sipping coffee at deliberate intervals, fixed a patient gaze on Farmer Goudron's face, and plainly offered a patient ear to every syllable of Farmer Goudron's volubility. Occasionally a brisk nod hinted his approval of Goudron's views as to the policy of Bonaparte. Goudron, sated by the applause of his familiars, began to be tickled by the approval of a stranger. Responsive, he blustered over the world. Had he been in command, the Battle of Alexandria would have been fought in a very different fashion; the British would never have been suffered to shatter the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. At the close of these fuliginous utterances, which the satellites of Gou-

dron received with a hiccuping enthusiasm, Monsieur Poirier permitted himself to clap his hands.

This deference on the part of a stranger, flattering Goudron's vanity, ended in applauding and applauded neighboring their chairs, and gained for the applauder the direct address of the farmer's conversation. Some chance egotism of the speaker occasioned the naming of his name, and this seemed much to tickle the interest of the listener.

"Goudron?" he echoed, with a lively curiosity. "Is your name Goudron?"

The farmer wagged his red face.

"Goudron is my name," he answered.

"Jean Goudron at your service. None better known in these parts, though I say it who should not."

Monsieur Poirier leaned forward eagerly.

"Did you ever know a man named Larigot?" he questioned.

Goudron banged the table with his fist.

"Larigot?" he cried. "I should just think so. He and I were fellow warders in the time of the Widow Capet."

This way of speaking of the late queen, Marie Antoinette, was still popular enough in France to need no explanation for Monsieur Poirier. His smile increased in amiability.

"Then we are friends already," he declared, "for it was my privilege to make the acquaintance of Monsieur Larigot some little time ago."

"The good Larigot!" Goudron murmured vinously. "I have not seen him for a long time. I left Paris when I inherited this farm here, and he remained in the capital. How is he getting on?"

"I do not think he wants for anything," Poirier answered dryly. "I am sure that he makes no complaints. He often speaks of you and of all the tricks and jests you enjoyed together at the expense of the Widow Capet. I couldn't believe them all."

Goudron laughed heartily.

"Oh, I expect they were true enough. He and I used to tease the she-wolf a lot. I may say without boasting that no one was cleverer than I in finding ways to vex her."

Monsieur Poirier, leaning back, admired the speaker.

"You must tell me all about it," he urged; and Goudron, nothing loath, told him all about it.

It was an ugly tale, and during the telling most of the company edged apart or slipped away, not because the tale was ugly, but because they had heard it often before and because anything that had happened before the coming of Bonaparte already seemed ancient history. So Monsieur Poirier was left alone with Goudron, and he listened to Goudron's narrative with great attention. It was a hideous narrative of the indignities, humiliations, and wrongs that brutal and cruel men were able to inflict upon an unhappy woman. It should have made a sensitive mortal sick to hear, but Monsieur Poirier did not appear to be sensitive. When Goudron had finished his infamous recollections, Monsieur Poirier, still smiling approvingly, spoke.

"Your friend Larigot barely did you justice, and it is satisfactory to learn from your own lips of your patriotic conduct. Would you believe it, there still are people who profess a regard for the late queen?"

"No queens here!" shouted Goudron, who was now in a temper that oscillated fitfully between good and ill humor. "Call her the Widow Capet, and have done."

"I sit corrected," Monsieur Poirier replied. "But the thing is even as I say. I have a customer in Paris, an American gentleman, Doctor Lucretius Dee, of Boston— Probably you have never heard of him."

Goudron nodded his head to signify that the name of Doctor Dee was un-

known to him, and Monsieur Poirier resumed:

"This Doctor Dee cherishes a strange devotion for the memory of Marie Antoinette——"

"The Widow Capet," Goudron corrected again, and Monsieur Poirier inclined his head in recognition of the rebuke.

"He always carries her picture next his heart," Monsieur Poirier continued. "I should believe he was in love with her if a man could be in love with a woman many years dead."

"He might have been her lover easily enough while she was alive," Goudron grunted. "But those Yankees are all mad. What business has a republican to trouble his head about a queen?"

"Perhaps because the queen was also a woman," Monsieur Poirier suggested, but Goudron did not heed him. He was evidently thinking of something else, for he leaned forward and tapped his companion on the knee.

"This mad American of yours," he questioned in a low voice, "is he a man of means?"

"He is, I believe, quite comfortably off," Monsieur Poirier replied, with an expression of some surprise at the question.

"Then," Goudron suggested confidentially, "he might be inclined to buy a couple of trifles I have that used to belong to the Widow Capet."

Monsieur Poirier looked encouraging.

"I should think it very likely," he replied. "What are these trifles you speak of?"

"Oh, just knickknacks," Goudron answered. "Look here! Why not come across to my house—it's quite near—and look at them for yourself?"

Monsieur Poirier agreed eagerly to the proposition and rose to his feet. Goudron did the like, with a glance at the clock.

"It's earlier than I usually turn in," he grunted. "But we'll find a bottle of wine at my place, and finish the night there."

The sweet night air was grateful after the reek of the inn, and Monsieur Poirier sniffed it in silence, leaving speech to his companion, who abused the privilege. Presently they came within view of a large farmhouse, toward which Goudron swept an unsteady arm of ownership. It stood very black against the sky, but when it first loomed into view, Monsieur Poirier could have sworn that a long, vertical chink of light suggested a slightly opened door. Perhaps he was mistaken, for in another instant all was uniform darkness. Yet another instant and Goudron was drubbing the door with his fists. Followed a shooting of bolts, and the door opened, with a gush of light. In the doorway stood a woman who, as Monsieur Poirier noted, made desperate assertion to be very sleepy, but who undoubtedly was exceedingly frightened.

"This is my wife," Goudron hiccuped by way of introduction. He used, indeed, a less respectful epithet, but his meaning was clear enough. The woman curtsied pitifully. Goudron gruffly ordered her to bring wine, and, bidding Poirier make himself at home, tramped heavily upstairs to look for the toys he had promised to show his visitor. The woman seemed unable to speak or move. Poirier addressed her quietly.

"I shall hear nothing," he said. "I shall see nothing. Get him out quickly."

The woman read friendship in Poirier's face, and darted to a cellar door. Poirier had said that he would hear nothing, see nothing, but he had spoken, as it were, metaphorically. In a mirror on the wall, he saw a youth emerge from the cellar and glide swiftly through the door that the woman held open; and he heard her strangled sob as she noiselessly closed the door behind

him. She faced the newcomer with swimming eyes.

"I am an honest woman," she said, "though I am married to the greatest beast in France. Yonder lad loved me. I was married to this pig by my parents because he was rich. My true lover came to-night to say good-by before joining the army. I did not dream that my husband would come home so early."

"My fault, I am afraid," said the commercial traveler affably. "Your good husband——" He paused, with a queer smile, and added: "Perhaps that is hardly the term?"

The woman made no reply, but the look on her face was more eloquent than a thousand words.

"You are, indeed, then, very unhappy?" Monsieur Poirier asked.

"I wish I were dead," the woman answered, with the bitterness of truth.

"Don't say that," urged the compassionate bagman. "None of us knows what the next few hours may have in store. I wish I had time to read your horoscope."

"What is that?" asked the woman dully.

"Your chapter in that book whose language is ciphered by the stars," answered the commercial traveler. "But at a guess I can say to you, 'Be of hope, be of cheer.'"

"There is no hope or cheer left for me in this world," the woman answered despondently.

While they had been talking, she had brought a bottle of wine from a cupboard and a brace of deep-mouthed glasses, and had set them on the table.

"No hope nor cheer for me," she repeated.

"Of course," said Monsieur Poirier, in a particularly loud and cheerful voice, "I quite understand that such a housewife as you has her linen closet stocked, but if ever you should want something extra fine——"

The door behind him opened gently, and Goudron came into the room in slippers. For all his bulk, he could move quietly when he chose, but not too quietly for Poirier's fine ear. Goudron was all of a grin.

"I've taken you by surprise," he chuckled. "I thought you might be making love to my wife while my back was turned. Heaven pity you if you had!"

Monsieur Poirier's right hand, carelessly thrust into a pocket, rested lovingly on the butt of a pistol, but he laughed as he answered his host.

"You are not the man to run such risks with, my dear sir, despite the undeniable attractions of madame your wife."

"You are right," said Goudron. "I am not. If ever my wife has a fancy for a gallant, there will be graves for two in the churchyard very soon." He laughed heavily, and, while the woman shivered, he flung a couple of objects on the table. "There are the playthings," he said, and, opening the bottle, he poured out two bumpers of wine while his visitor picked up the trinkets.

One was a little fan, its sticks jaundiced, its modish painting faded. The other was a pocket mirror, in a tortoiseshell case. The examiner mused. That cracked and shabby glass had quickened to the fairest face in the world. That little toy, like the wing of a bird, had once cooled cheeks that glowed with universal praises, had once dried cheeks that ran with too-familiar tears.

Goudron gaped at him.

"You seem to be struck all of a heap," he sneered.

"I was thinking," Monsieur Poirier replied, "that the American gentleman I spoke of would be willing to pay a price for these relics."

"If he be the ninny you make out," Goudron grunted, "he ought to be made to pay a pretty penny for them. Give me fifty louis for the pair, and if you

can squeeze much more out of him, I'll trust you as an honest man to give me a commission on your profit when next you travel this way."

"That seems a fair offer," said Monsieur Poirier. "I have not, indeed, so much money about me, but I can return to the inn——"

"I'll trust you," interrupted Goudron. "Take the things and pay me to-morrow. But you'll have to pay me an extra louis to reward my confidence."

Monsieur Poirier smiled.

"You are a shrewd man," he commented. "I like shrewdness. So I have taken quite a fancy to you, and there is a little business proposition I should like to put before you some time."

"No time like the present whenever business is on the carpet," Goudron said quickly.

Poirier glanced at the woman.

"Perhaps," he suggested, "we ought not to keep madame any longer from her slumbers."

"Go to bed!" shouted Goudron brutally, and, with a shudder, the young woman quitted the room.

Goudron motioned to Poirier to be seated, drew a chair to him, and, resting his elbows on the table, stared at him.

"Well," he asked, "what is your business?"

"Is there," Poirier asked, "a lonely place somewhere in this neighborhood that goes by the name of the Ring of the Two Trees?"

"Of course there is," Goudron answered. "Every fool knows that."

He explained that it was an open space in the middle of the neighboring forest, with two trees in its midst. It was believed to be haunted, and was carefully avoided by the peasantry. Monsieur Poirier rubbed his hands in evident satisfaction.

"I have reason to believe," he said, "that a very considerable sum of money is buried in that spot, concealed there by the former lord of the land when

he fled abroad at the time of the revolution."

"Who told you this story?" Goudron asked cautiously.

Poirer shook his head and looked mysterious.

"That I may not say," he replied, "but I am so firmly convinced of the truth of the tale that I have come hither on purpose to see for myself. But as the task of digging for the treasure is likely to prove too heavy for my strength, I was casting about for some likely fellow to lend me a hand. You seem to be the very man for the job. Will you do the digging for me and take half of whatever we find as your remuneration for your pains?"

Goudron's eyes gleamed greedily, and he promptly agreed to the proposition. It was arranged that the pair were to meet at the Ring of the Two Trees, whose locality Goudron explained, at six o'clock the next morning. Poirier asked Goudron if he felt any compunction at taking money that rightly belonged to some one else. Goudron laughed heartily at the question. Poirier laughed, too, and went off to his inn with the relics in his pocket. Goudron looked after him into the night and grinned.

The next morning, Goudron, equipped with spade and pickax, made his way to the Ring of the Two Trees a good two hours earlier than the time appointed. But for all his earliness, he found worthy Monsieur Poirier peacefully waiting for him. Goudron showed some confusion at finding the bagman ahead of him, but Monsieur Poirier manifested no annoyance or even surprise at his companion's evident intention.

"I am glad to find you are so punctual," he said, and said it so simply, with no trace of malice in eye or voice, that Goudron allowed himself to accept the awkward situation without comment and nodded agreement when

Monsieur Poirier further volunteered the statement that it was a cold morning. A cold morning it certainly was, one of those cold mornings that sometimes follow a warm evening of late summer. The air was chill, and the aspect of the waning wood gloomy and forbidding.

Poirier gave a little shiver, and, producing a silver drinking flask from his pocket, withdrew the stopper and lifted it to his lips. Goudron watched him enviously, and Poirier, as if recalled to a sense of politeness by the other's expression, proffered the flask.

"A nip of good brandy," he said, "is no harm on a morning like this."

Goudron nodded assent, clapped the flask to his lips, tasted some excellent old brandy, and well-nigh emptied the bottle before he handed it back to its owner, who, making no comment on its lightened condition, replaced it in his pocket.

"This must be the spot," he said, pointing to the space between the two trees. "It would be well for us to dig here."

There was greed in Goudron's eyes, greed in his gestures, as he seized the spade and struck it into the earth. When the mound of displaced earth had grown to a considerable size, Poirier held up his hand.

"I am sure," he said, "that I heard the chink of metal. Let me look!"

He stooped down over the hole with his back to Goudron, and after scrambling for a few moments, drew forth a canvas bag that jingled as he shook it. He pulled the cord that tied the neck of the bag, and a number of gold pieces fell out, glittering against the brown mold. Monsieur Poirier seemed to be busily engaged in counting the coins, but he could not have been as busy as he seemed, for all of a sudden he sprang to his feet with astonishing alacrity and leaped lightly across the open space. It was well he did so, for

Goudron's pickax descended crushingly on the spot where, a few seconds before, Poirier's head had been between him and the money.

Poirier, on the other side of the hole, regarded Goudron with a face that was still smiling. Goudron glared at him in hateful astonishment. Monsieur Poirier began to laugh gently.

"Ah, my friend," he said, "I expected as much. The greed of gold is a sad thing. If it had not been for this little bit of glass, I should have been a victim."

He held up his left hand as he spoke, and showed Goudron that the palm of it framed the little mirror that had once belonged to Marie Antoinette. Goudron swore a beastly oath, and, swinging the pickax in the air, made to advance upon Monsieur Poirier, who with great composure produced a pistol from his pocket and took a steady aim at the farmer.

"Do not excite yourself, I beg of you," he said in a very amiable voice. "There is really no need for you to do so. I promise you that if you are able to take away this treasure, you are perfectly welcome to do so."

Goudron slowly lowered the lifted pickax to the ground and rested his hands upon it. He had suddenly begun to change color, and huge drops of perspiration were rolling from his forehead. He began to gasp for breath.

"I feel sick," he said. "I feel very sick."

He groaned as he spoke, and the pickax fell from his fingers. He staggered to the nearest tree and leaned against it.

"What is the matter?" he asked feebly.

"Do you think," Monsieur Poirier asked politely, "it is remorse for having tried to kill me?"

Goudron glared at him.

"Damn you!" he cried, with a faint

flicker of ferocity. "Don't try your jests on me."

He was growing paler and palpably weaker, and the consciousness of his condition asserted itself again in the question:

"What is the matter with me?"

Monsieur Poirier put his pistol into his pocket and advanced toward Goudron, where he leaned against the tree. Monsieur Poirier clasped his hands behind his back and eyed Goudron critically.

"It is my belief," he said quietly, "that you are dying."

Goudron's slowly numbing faculties struggled against the condemnation in his antagonist's voice.

"What do you mean?" he said hoarsely.

Monsieur Poirier explained affably.

"That brandy," he said, "which you drank and which I took very good care not to drink, was poisoned." He took out a handsome gold watch and surveyed its face. "You have about five minutes," he said.

The man looked at him.

"Who are you," he said, "and why did you do this?"

Monsieur Poirier put back his watch and made a deprecating gesture with his hands.

"My name," he said, "will suggest

the reason to you. I am the American doctor of medicine, Lucretius Dee, of Boston. You are now wiser than you were as to why I did this. It was in punishment for the insults and injuries that you inflicted upon an unhappy woman who was also an unhappy queen."

And then, in a quiet, even voice, Doctor Dee enumerated the affronts and infamies of which the man Goudron had been so boastfully proud on the previous evening. "I heard of your doings," Doctor Dee went on, "from your friend Larigot in Paris, who, by the way, has, thanks to me, anticipated your departure from this world. I came here a little while ago, but you were away, and, learning something of your character, I prepared this little trap for you, planted here myself the gold that was to lure you to a lonely place where I could, undisturbed, sit in judgment on you."

He was about to say more, but perceived that it would be a waste of his time, as the farmer was no longer alive.

Some days later, those who were searching for the missing Goudron came to the Ring of the Two Trees and found the dead man lying at the foot of one of them. Pinned to his breast was a paper that bore these words:

"In The Name of the Queen."





PLAYS AND PLAYERS BY ALAN DALE

PARENTS on the American stage seem to have gone out of fashion, like oil lamps and green baize curtains. Dear old mother no longer fills us with tender memories and poetic thoughts, and as for father—well, we laugh, as we used to thrill, when he “draws himself up to his full height” and declaims: “Henceforth you are no chee-yild of mine.” It all seems so absurd in these enlightened days, when one’s parents matter so little, and really nice people don’t have them at all. In the eyes of the American playwright, dear old mother is very often pictured as a “social climber,” so that the public can enjoy all sorts of fun by means of the poor old lady; while father is just “in Wall Street,” busy coining shekels and influencing markets.

In the accepted sense of the word, father and mother are not parents at all, but merely stage furniture, and “filial devotion” takes a back seat. We call it very old-fashioned. Perhaps, in our chastened moods, we may insist that it is all quite pretty and restful, but as a “motive” it is almost obsolete, and ridiculously idyllic. The American playwright seems to revel in the idea that, while we may choose our own mates, we have never yet been permitted to select our own parents, and of course that is not dramatic. Father and mother were always nice, but never tense.

We laugh heartily, if a trifle contemptuously, at certain plays, usually born abroad, in which father displays the old patriarchal idea and “runs things” with a high hand. This is almost inconceivable to us to-day. That any self-respecting girl should listen to what father has to say of her engagement is unbelievable! That any youth with red blood in his veins should actually discuss his “love affairs” at home is a joke. Of course the American playwright usually lives in New York, where there are few homes, and where young married couples are so little attracted toward children that they are inclined to credit their own fathers and mothers with the same indifference. His point of view is Manhattanese, but one is bound to consider it.

Plays in which father and mother sit opposite each other by the fireside—which, by the bye, has progressed into a radiator—and discuss the affairs of their dear ones will, in nine cases out of ten, prove unsuccessful. The old idea of mother has been replaced by a new and entirely different one, portraying her as an “elegantly gowned” and somewhat dictatorial creature, much addicted to a “good time.” Father is generally displayed as an agitated American, slightly gray at the temples, but always in “full evening dress” at dinner time.

Abroad, they still cling to the conventional idea of parenthood and de-

cline to relinquish it. Our managers occasionally import the plays that persist in cherishing this notion, and—they go to the storehouse. Critics refuse to consider them, except as fantasies, and the public grins in derision. The "great American play," which hasn't as yet been written—although I know several playwrights who fancy that they have been responsible for it—will undoubtedly emphasize our incubator idea of parents.

The most delightful play that this earnest young season has as yet offered is the little comedy of English provincial life produced at the Princess Theater under the title of "Hobson's Choice." Later, it was removed to the Comedy. It succeeded because it lived up to the theories I have just set forth. It was very English, even provincially English; its motive was the arrogant parenthood of a particularly aggressive old man, who owned three full-fledged and articulate daughters. But—and please pause for a moment on the "but"—at the very end of the piece this old-fashioned father got everything that was "coming to him," according to the American idea. He was deserted by his daughters, flouted by his sons-in-law, jeered at in his old age, and practically pilloried. In addition to which—and this is the most important point of all in the eyes of American audiences—his business went to rack and ruin, and in order to live he was forced to merge himself into a partnership with one of his despised sons-in-law.

The success of "Hobson's Choice" was instantaneous. It came into New York unheralded—as the critics say when they have not been deluged with "press matter"—and the unanimous enthusiasm of its reviews obviated any necessity of quoting them. As far as critical comment went, it was an "embarrassment of riches." Poor old father was chastised for his patriarchal self-assertiveness with such vigor and

so much gusto that he hadn't a leg to stand upon, and the daughters triumphed.

It was Miss Molly Pearson, a clever and artistic little woman much addicted to "types," who played the important rôle of the leading daughter—the girl who was the first to mutiny, and who seemed to take an almost vicious delight in making the old man miserable. Before the play was produced, Miss Pearson, I am told, had many misgivings. She is not an American, and may therefore be pardoned for not thoroughly comprehending the "father" idea in these climes. She believed that the play might be rejected because her rôle was so thankless, and she seemed to alienate all sympathy by her sinister treatment of father. Really she thought that! When, in the last act, we saw the poor old fellow ill and alone, Miss Pearson dreaded that our sympathies might go out to *him*, and thus thwart the entire proceedings.

And years ago that would have happened. We should have been terrified at such a "moral" as that pointed by "Hobson's Choice," which fractured the fifth commandment as joyously as if it had been the seventh. We should have hated to take young people to view a play that cast parenthood into such pictorial disrepute.

What happened to father in "Hobson's Choice" made for its success. It was up to date. It put the masculine parent in his right place, and showed the rights of children in glowing colors. Children to-day, like Ibsen's heroines, must "live their lives," and as father didn't bring them into the world to please *them*, they could scarcely be expected to live in it to please *him*. That is the theory the American playwright embroiders upon. That was the theme of "Hobson's Choice," than which no more entertaining comedy has been evolved in years.

Once or twice my spirits sank, when

I saw poor old father getting it. I said to myself:

"Mr. Harold Brighthouse is just on the verge of going too far. If that old man gets one more 'biff,' the worm will turn, and the play will crumble, delightful though it be."

It didn't. At the end of the piece, really nothing was left of poor old father but a husk. The three married daughters, whom he had ruled so impertinently, came in to see him in his illness, but the idea of staying with him in his deserted home was repulsive to them. The eldest of the three, impersonated by Miss Pearson, decided in a cold and businesslike manner to remain; and when the final curtain fell, it was upon the utter rout, the complete demolition—I might almost say the perfect disintegration—of the parent.

The first audience at the Princess loved "Hobson's Choice," and others have, of course, done the same thing. If the playwright had wasted any sympathy on father, and had asked us to shed a tear or two at the close of the play, as we inspected his disastrous plight, the comedy would have failed. If the three haughty girls had been made to atone for their "unfilial" behavior, and had been displayed in bedewed attrition, "Hobson's Choice" would have missed its interesting point.

Father was the butt of the whole thing. Most of us seemed to feel that we had suffered from father for so long, and had "put up" with his arbitrary rules and regulations for so many years, that it was a joy and a relief to see him squelched. That is the New York idea, which may not, and probably does not, prevail everywhere. Still, as New York sets the fashions in clothes, as well as in fathers, it is quite likely that the metropolitan attitude may eventually become general.

I certainly liked "Hobson's Choice" better than any other play I have seen this season, and yet I rather hated my-

self for joining in the triumphal desecration of father. You see, I can go back several years—well, five or six!—to the dramatic days when the heroine used to cling to "popper's" neck and swear that she would never desert him—not even for dear Reginald—unless he promised to live with them for the rest of his life. Of course that was ridiculous; I admit it. But there *was* something in it, don't you think?

Not a comment was made at the Princess Theater on the "hard hearts" of the three recalcitrant daughters of poor old Hobson. The play seemed to touch a "responsive chord," as it were—just as if we had been impatiently waiting for the final blow to the exploded filial idea. The point that Miss Molly Pearson fancied would militate against the success of "Hobson's Choice" made the play. We laughed light-heartedly and gayly.

It now remains for some tender-mercied playwright to knock dear old mother from her tottering pinnacle, to show us the good old dame snubbed by her children and driven to some "retreat," where every well-regulated audience will find unctuous comedy in her dismay. What happened to father in "Hobson's Choice" must happen to mother in some future picture of modern life.

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" said good old *Lear*, who was also inane enough to prattle about "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend!" Old father in "Hobson's Choice" was, of course, awfully sorry for himself, completely filled with self-pity; but that was where the fun came in, and where the playwright pulverized once and forever the long-standing convention of filial "devotion."

A play called "The Bargain" failed because its Hebrew father—and Hebrew fathers are detestable in their patriarchalism—insisted upon struggling

for the sympathy of the audience in his aggressive dealings with his children. We laughed at it as impossible, as behind the times and "un-American." Possibly, we said, superbly disdainful, on the extreme East Side of Manhattan, in which we are not at all interested, such dreadful people as the characters in "The Bargain" might exist, but to expect us to spend an evening with them and sympathize with their motives was ludicrous. Old Hebrew fathers in plays always have beards and never wear "full evening dress," and we do not like that. All of which sounds as if it might be flippant, but if you will consider it carefully, you will discover beneath the surface a certain amount of "suggestion."

In "The Bargain," the girl loved a Gentile, and poor father objected in some very vociferous and declamatory utterances that sounded like Noah's ark to our modern ears. That managers who are supposed to know their public should have produced such a play was extraordinary, and yet I am told that two distinct firms sponsored "The Bargain." The same malign fate, as far as New York was concerned, pursued Louis K. Anspacher's play, "Our Children," in which the leading rôle was that of father, sympathetically and tenderly drawn, and therefore not at all to our liking. We were inexpressibly bored.

So I insist upon believing that, on the American stage, parents have gone out of fashion, like oil lamps and green baize curtains. Soon not a vestige of them will remain. They may occasionally be revived, in plays like "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or "East Lynne," but they are really as extinct as horses in these days of rampant automobiles. You would smile nowadays if you saw carriages with horses outside a theater, and you are inclined to do the same thing when you see plays with "mommer and popper" *inside* a theater. Stage

heroes and heroines must live their own lives. They must go forward, not backward. The people responsible for their being are of no earthly interest, except as targets for humor. And sometimes it is surely quite pardonable to despise father and mother—when you look at the heroes and heroines they have produced!

Mr. John Drew and Mr. Leo Dittrichstein—you will pardon the apparent heresy of speaking of them in the same breath—represent curious examples of stellar vagaries. The latter could scarcely twinkle without an exceedingly good play; the former might find it difficult to shine *with* one. Dittrichstein is merely a possibility, while Drew is an institution, like the Brooklyn Bridge or the Woolworth Building. Naturally "students of the drama," as we love to call ourselves when we write abstruse essays on the art of people who go through life pretending to be somebody else, must look to the immature star of the Dittrichstein brand for anything new in the theatrical line; for John Drew, being established, and having reached the enviable position where the public hankers to see John Drew first and his "impersonation" next, does not worry very much about "drama."

Still, Mr. Drew is important, and a "John Drew play," even if it be of less significance to the drama than the vehicle used by Leo Dittrichstein, should and does get first consideration. No actor has reached the luxurious position Mr. Drew occupies without hard and relentless work. It has taken years, and at least a couple of generations, to make a "John Drew play" possible. If you saw one for the first time to-day, and were allowed the privilege of expressing your opinion, you would say that it was a poor and an early-Victorian thing. You might even assert that its acting possibilities were nil. But nobody sees a "John Drew play" for the first time, and if he did, and had any

pert remarks to make, he would be lost in the shuffle.

What is a "John Drew play"? I might answer that "The Chief," by Horace Annesley Vachell, at the Empire Theater, is exactly that, but probably I had better be more precise. A "John Drew play" is a comedy in which the leading character is a middle-aged man—how old that is I don't know and don't want to know—with a loving heart and perfectly fitting evening clothes—and the evening clothes are more essential than the loving heart. This middle-aged man is not married when the play begins, but *always* when it ends. The gap is filled with pictures of his dalliance with charming women, who are either his wards or his typists or his secretaries, and with a few—very few—complications. Usually he is English, and very often he has a title, and his ancestors are perfectly well-bred people, who, on the stroke of six, p^{er} em, always change their clothes and look gorgeous. The scenes are mostly drawing-rooms, filled with gold chairs—Mr. Drew generally sits on each gold chair, so as not to make the others jealous—and libraries in which you perceive neatly bound volumes and well-selected furniture. Nothing very much happens, but it is all very charming and exactly what you expect. If you got any more, you would feel rather annoyed than otherwise.

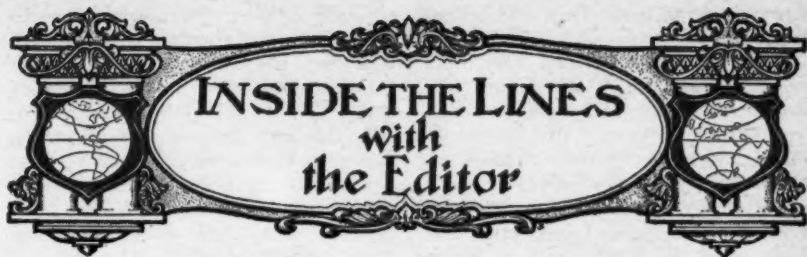
Just the same, any writer who attempted to belittle Mr. John Drew because the work that he does in a "John Drew play" seems so easy would be making a serious and a ridiculous mistake. Mr. Drew *is* easy in this sort of play, because he has done nothing else for years, but if you imagine that any inexperienced actor could jump into a "John Drew" rôle and "put it over," as the saying is, you are quite wrong. When we say that John Drew merely "plays himself," we could not possibly believe that the hero of "The Chief"—

a middle-aged person who professes to think that the ingénue is infatuated with him, and allows a lot of foolish fiction to interfere with the "course of true love"—is Mr. John Drew. Possibly the actor smiles at the ingenuous rôle even more cynically than we do—how could any actor of John Drew's experience fail to smile?—but he can play that sort of rôle as no other actor could possibly play it; so he plays it! We cannot blame him.

Everybody at the Empire Theater seemed to say: "A real John Drew play!" in quite an affectionate and clinging way, and that settled it. If "The Chief" had been a tense drama, with plenty of suspense and thrill and problem, we should have felt like the proverbial chicken that dug up the pen-knife and didn't know what to do with it. "The Chief" soothed us and offered us precisely what we expected; and in the second act, in the drawing-room at Hallicombe-on-Thames, in the afternoon, they all sat down and had tea! A "John Drew play" without tea would be absurd. It is so comforting to see a set of well-dressed and well-born characters resting in a drawing-room and "aving their tea."

Mr. Leo Ditrichstein, in "The Great Lover," at the Longacre Theater, had to work, and work he did. He was on the stage and in its center most of the time in the rôle of a star baritone amid amusing surroundings that suggested life behind the scenes at the Metropolitan Opera House. Very entertaining and novel it all was, and it will be a wonderful aid to the stellar aspirations of this actor.

And perhaps in the years to come, when Ditrichstein has achieved success like John Drew, we shall talk of a "Leo Ditrichstein play," and serenely watch the characters as they sit in their lovely and ornate drawing-room "aving their tea." For that means ease, content, and—relaxation.



INSIDE THE LINES with the Editor

A GREAT deal of publicity was recently given to the adoption of a small orphan boy by Mr. and Mrs. Finley J. Shepard. The interest of the public was, of course, stimulated by the fact that Mrs. Shepard was formerly Miss Helen Gould, but one of its effects was to bring to light a good many facts, hitherto known only to a comparatively few people, connected with what has been called the movement for child welfare.

This movement has developed, as one of its features, a study of children who are either actually defective, mentally or physically, or who are merely backward; and out of this study there is growing by degrees a system of observation and treatment which has substantial claims to consideration as a science.

Within the past year, Columbia University, evidently realizing the importance of the subject as a legitimate branch of university education, has established a department for this study, which is called the Speyer School. To realize the purposes of the school, a limited number of children have been selected. Reversing the customary procedure, children are admitted, not because of their ability, but because of their inability, to pass the traditional mental tests. And whereas, in the past, school authorities have paid no attention to the physical condition of prospective pupils, no candidate for admission to the Speyer School is accepted

without a most searching physical examination. Every conceivable thing about a child's present bodily and mental state, his individual history, and that of his parents and relatives, is made the subject of investigation. And if the results show that he is sufficiently abnormal, he is accepted.

Those who have charge of the children in the school are thus provided with full information respecting each child, and the instruction and treatment are adapted to each individual case.

For the admission of a child into a family by adoption, as in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Shepard, it has been the practice for some time to subject him to substantially the same tests—but for a purpose exactly the opposite, of course.

People who wish to adopt a child no longer follow a caprice. It is only after a most thorough and painstaking investigation, directed by scientific methods, of many individual children that a selection is finally made. The adoption of children, therefore, seems likely to develop into a scientific system, and it may be said, almost, that foster parents know more about their little charges than the average natural father and mother do about their own.

AN instance of the manner in which old words become new ones, in the sense of acquiring new meanings, is to be found in the popular term *feminism*.

Hardly anybody nowadays would

dream of using it in speaking of "the qualities of females," the definition that is found in the dictionaries.

In what may be called the modern usage of the word, *feminism* is not an English word at all. It is really an adoption into the English language of the French equivalent. The French first used it to identify what had been known, in the United States at any rate, as the "Woman's Rights Movement," a phrase that was widely used all through the '70s.

To-day it is closely associated with the campaign for the ballot, for the reason, of course, that "votes for women," which is, after all, only a part of the feminist movement, has been made its most conspicuous feature, one indeed upon which everything else depends.

In the popular mind, this movement, so-called, is wholly modern, so much so that it is difficult to find anybody who realizes that it is almost two thousand four hundred years old, if we are justified in speaking of it as something that began with Plato's demand for the equality of the sexes and has been kept alive all through the intervening centuries.

The subject was agitated, more or less, by distinguished men and women in the Middle Ages, and from then down through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries in Italy, France, Germany, and England. At least one queen was active in the feminist propaganda, and a poetess of some distinction, the daughter of the astrologer of Charles V., made a strong and sustained plea for woman's emancipation.

Apparently the new word—or, to be more accurate, the old word in its new meaning—has come to stay.

ACCORDING to reports which are specific enough to be entirely authentic, European housewives are confronted by the daily or weekly problem

as to how to make provision for the needs of their families, and clothes for themselves as well.

The pinch of war times seems to make itself felt among the well to do even more than among those who have been considered the poorer classes. These people find themselves in possession of incomes that have not increased; in many cases, indeed, there has been a marked decrease; so that they are left without anything to offset the rising cost of food.

Meats have doubled and trebled in price; lard and flour are four times what they were; eggs, butter, and vegetables have about doubled; and of these only what were formerly the cheapest kinds are available. Leguminous and farinaceous foods cost one hundred per cent more than they did eighteen months ago. The quality of all these things, too, has sadly deteriorated. Foods to be eaten with bread, like cheese, either cannot be bought or cannot be enjoyed. Sugar is very narrowly restricted, and cocoa, tea, and preserves are almost unknown.

To a lesser degree, these conditions prevail even in England, if we may judge from the flood of letters from troubled housewives that are published in every number of the women's magazines. Some of them ask for information as to how they may economize, and others tell how they are meeting the emergency. One of them tells of her "war luncheons" of bread and cheese and a simple sweet, adding that her husband and all their guests have had to accept them and have done so cheerfully. Another speaks of a former correspondent's "budget" as "rather shocking," and suggests that if she could make up her mind to live less luxuriously, she might save the wages of a maid and cut down her bills.

These same magazines are also filled with inquiries about economizing on clothes. How to get a "warm winter

coat" or a "velveteen rest gown" is what puzzles one of these distressed women.

Considering these facts, there seems little chance that the people of Europe are in a position to save enough individually to meet the expenses of the war, as one hopeful economist suggests. Calculating the cost to all the belligerents at forty-five million dollars a day, he thinks that if each of the four hundred and fifty million people in Europe saves ten cents, the war expenditures are provided for.

THE statement has been made recently that the number of women drivers of automobiles in England outnumbered the civilian men. This applies, of course, to pleasure cars. Naturally enough, military cars and those in commercial use are still driven by men; with one exception, however.

Whether it is due to the heavy drafts that the war has made upon the male population, or to the increasing necessity of earning a living, the fact is that many women have taken up taxi driving. They find little difficulty, apparently, in finding employment of this sort, in spite of the laws that regulate the management of a taxicab. A great many towns are welcoming the women who seek this form of employment.

The occupation, of course, implies the possession of a considerable degree of skill, as to which the authorities must be satisfied before the necessary license will be issued. We must conclude, therefore, that these women taxi drivers are recruited from what our English friends would call the "better classes," women who have had some experience in driving pleasure cars.

The work is said to be not very exacting. In one case that is spoken of, two women who are sharing one taxicab between them each do five hours' work a day, and are able in this way to reduce their hours of labor very sub-

stantially. The earnings vary considerably, of course, but it is calculated that a "lady" who makes less than fifteen dollars a week is not considered especially enterprising.

A good many of these women own the taxicabs they drive; others hire them; and still others are employed by local taxicab proprietors.

NEARLY a thousand automobiles, averaging about four passengers to each one, visited the Yellowstone National Park, in Wyoming, from August 1st to the middle of October.

Up to the former date, the entrance of automobiles within the limits of the park had been prohibited, unless, indeed, they were government cars. No private cars with tourists had previously been permitted to travel through the reservation. Even since the first of August last, motoring parties have been required to observe certain restrictions and follow out a carefully planned schedule.

It is only within the last two years that any of the great national parks have been open to automobiles in this manner. The Yellowstone is the latest; a fact which seems to indicate that the policy has worked out satisfactorily.

It is partly due to this, no doubt, that there has been a great increase in the number of visitors registered at all the great parks of the West in the season that has just closed.

Of course, the world's fair at San Francisco was another, and perhaps more potent, reason for this increase, even though it is to be noted that visitors to the three California parks did not increase in the same ratio as did those to the others.

THE indomitable tendency of human nature to reap advantages, and even blessings, from its great calamities has been demonstrated again and again in the course of its history.

The great war, doubtless the most dreadful of all that have overtaken the race, is likely to prove as fruitful of such things as any disaster that has preceded it.

Among the benefits that have already appeared, none is more hopeful or more interesting than the effort, already elaborately organized, to train the crippled men to overcome their helplessness and become at least as useful to themselves as when they were whole and sound.

All of the warring nations have taken up this work, and, having been prompted to it by sentiments of pity, are finding that their own interests are involved in carrying it on. For in turning human derelicts into wage earners they are relieving themselves of an enormous burden in the future.

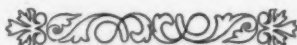
That such training was possible was, of course, known long before the war. One conspicuous instance of the kind was well known in Germany in the case of a man who, born without hands, had

been educated in the use of his feet to do almost unbelievable things.

This man, and others like him, though less proficient, have been utilized by their respective governments as demonstrators in the schools that have been founded for the instruction of the war's crippled and blinded.

In these schools, special exercises have been introduced to strengthen crippled members and to accustom the individual to the new use to which they are to be put. Afterward comes the training in a trade adapted to the capacity of the pupil, or, if that is out of the question, a new occupation is invented.

Great patience and constant practice during what may be called the apprenticeship are, of course, absolutely necessary, but such progress has already been made that it is now an assured fact that, when peace is declared, there will be no horde of hopeless dependents such as other wars have left in their wake.



AFTER THE TRYST

AS, after mass is said, one feels a faint
 Desire to leave the world and be a saint—
 A holy longing born of joy surmised
 From meditation on the life of Christ—
 So I, when I had left you, felt in me
 A sweet desire to leave the world and be
 A hermit for your sake, to all else dead—
 As after mass is said.*

As, after mass is said, the faithful go
 And, meeting one another, dimly know
 Their hearts have changed, and on that sacred day
 Put all their little rancors far away,
 So I, when I had left you, felt in me
 A new-born love for all humanity,
 And knew the joy of life, and sorrow fled,
 As after mass is said.

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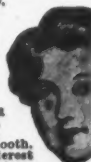


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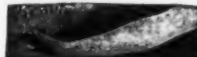
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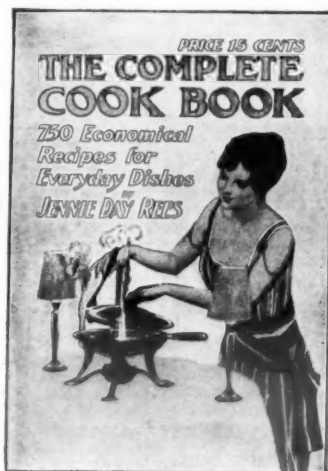
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